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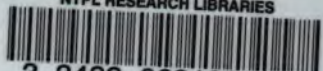
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A  
**SERIES OF LETTERS,**

ADDRESSED TO

**REV. HOSEA BALLOU,**  
**OF BOSTON;**

BEING

**A VINDICATION OF THE DOCTRINE**

OF A

**Future Retribution,**

**AGAINST THE PRINCIPAL ARGUMENTS USED BY HIM, MR. BALFOUR,**  
**AND OTHERS.**

60  
**BY CHARLES HUDSON,**  
**Pastor of a Church in Westminster, Mass.**

*"I believed, therefore have I spoken".....PSALMIST.*

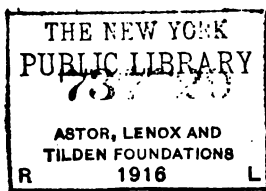
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1827.

30





DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS—TO WIT :

*District Clerk's Office.*

**B**E IT REMEMBERED, that on the seventeenth day of April, A. D. 1827, in the fifty-first year of the independence of the United States of America, CHARLES HUDSON of the said District, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as Author, in the words following, to wit:

A Series of Letters, addressed to Rev. Hosea Ballou, of Boston ; being a vindication of the doctrine of a future retribution, against the principal arguments used by him, Mr. Balfour and others. By Charles Hudson, Pastor of a Church in Westminster, (Mass.)

"I believed, therefore have I spoken."—Psalmist.

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned ;" and also to an act, entitled "An Act supplementary to an act, entitled, An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned ; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

JOHN W. DAVIS,

*Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

JOHN W. DAVIS  
CLERK  
MASS.

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# LETTERS.

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## LETTER I.

*Introductory remarks, statement of the question, and method of argumentation.*

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REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER,

Believing you to be a sincere inquirer after truth, and a friend to manly discussion; and feeling persuaded that the genuine doctrines of the gospel will not suffer by free investigation, I am induced to address you these Letters upon the subject of a *future retribution*, on which a difference of opinion obtains between us. And although I have every assurance of your candor and friendship, still I acknowledge that I feel no small share of diffidence in addressing a brother whose talents have rendered him eminent, and who has been in the ministry more years than I have been in existence. But prompted by the importance of the subject, and encouraged by the consideration of your candor and Christian affection, I propose in these Letters to offer such remarks upon your system as occur to my mind, state my own views upon the subject of future punishment, and adduce such evidence from scripture and reason, as has inclined me to believe, that, although all misery will be of limited duration, it will not be bounded by the death of the body.

I enter upon the examination of this subject with the more cheerfulness, from the conviction that I have no-

thing to lose. For if the opinion I have embraced, be in accordance with the scriptures, I feel conscious that it cannot be overthrown; and if it be unfounded, the sooner I am convinced of my error, the better. I have nothing to fear, therefore, in this discussion. But on the contrary, though I have not the vanity to suppose that I shall be able to effect any material change in your religious opinion, I trust I shall be able, in some degree, to show the reasons of mine; and what is still more valuable, to show the public that a religious discussion can be carried on in the exercise of Christian feelings, without bitterness or personal reflections.

Neither will the difference of opinion which exists among our brethren, give any occasion for triumph to the daughters of the uncircumcised; for all denominations differ in opinion among themselves. While the believers in endless misery are divided into numerous sects and parties, and are so embittered against each other, that they will have no fellowship together, and will even exclude each other from the table of their common Master, it cannot be thought strange that a difference of opinion should exist among the believers in the opposite doctrine. Neither is the existence of controversy in our order an unprecedented thing. The Unitarians, though a respectable and flourishing sect, are greatly divided in opinion; and public controversy has existed among them, as in the case of Price and Priestley. The Episcopal Church has furnished writers on almost every side of the question. And in our own country, Professor Stuart and Dr. Miller, both orthodox divines and advocates for the doctrine of the Trinity, have lately discussed before the public the subject of the "eternal Sonship of Christ." The Presbyterians at the South have recently been engaged in controversy on the principles of church government. Now should a dif-

ference of opinion among us create any alarm, when a difference equally great, exists in every other denomination? *Let him that is without sin, cast the first stone.*

A difference of sentiment in any denomination is evidence of the sincerity of its professors. The human mind is so constituted, and our educations are so very different, that men will necessarily arrive at different conclusions in matters of religion. No entire sect or party of men, who have courage to think for themselves, and frankness enough to declare their opinions, will be found agreed on every subject. When any entire denomination, therefore, profess to be united on every point, it is a strong presumptive argument, that they are wanting, either in independence or frankness. A diversity of views is not always an evil. It may serve many valuable purposes. It creates a spirit of inquiry, and calls into exercise many of the latent powers of the mind, which would otherwise have lain dormant, and wasted by inaction. It also opens a broad field for the exercise of that charity which is the distinguishing trait in the character of the Christian, and which is emphatically styled "*the bond of perfectness.*" Notwithstanding religious controversy has been greatly deprecated by many sincere and pious Christians, I am far from regarding it universally as an evil. A great part of Paul's epistles is of a controversial nature. And was not the glorious reformation from papal superstition effected by controversy? It is to free and manly discussion, that the doctrines of Protestants owe their rise. And it is by the same means that the doctrine of the "Restitution of all things" has been revived in this age and country. To free investigation, then, the Christian public is indebted for many of its most valuable blessings.

But religious controversy is not free from abuse. When it is carried on with an improper spirit, it is pro-



ductive of mischief. If it originates in ambition, and ends in bitterness ; if it generates the unhallowed feelings of hatred and ill-will, and destroys affection and fellowship, it may be regarded as an evil. But then, the fault lies not in controversy itself, but in the parties who engage therein. That disputant who misrepresents his opponent, by artfully giving a false construction to his language, or by passing over his principal argument ; who labors to conceal his own views, and wanders from the question at issue, gives evidence of the weakness of his cause, and evinces to the world that he is governed by unchristian feelings, and is contending for mastery rather than truth. But if controversy is properly conducted, it is nothing more than free and rational discussion.

Though in these pages I shall attempt to support the doctrine of a future retribution, you are not to consider that it is from self-interest or personal advantage that I plead for this doctrine. So far as selfish feelings are engaged, they remonstrate against a future retribution. Were I to shape my religious creed by my own individual feelings, I should exclude all misery, both present and future. If future punishment is true, I am exposed to it as well as others ; and hence it cannot be supposed that I flatter myself with any advantage from the truth of this doctrine. But human feelings are not the proper test. Sin always corrupts the mind, and leads the sinner to hope that he may escape the righteous judgments of God. A just retribution is the dread of sinful creatures. When Paul reasoned of a *judgment to come*, the unbelieving Felix *trembled*. There is, therefore, much more danger of being biassed against this doctrine, than in its favor. If a future punishment be the truth of God, it is natural to suppose that it will meet with opposition from the selfish feelings of the human heart ; while

your scheme will be supported by the same feelings, though it be an error. In order to judge correctly in the case, then, it is necessary that all selfish feelings and personal interest be laid aside.

Perhaps you may say that in the above remarks, I have adopted the maxims laid down by the believers in endless misery. And what of that? Must truth be rejected, because it is advanced by those who oppose our general system? If we are candid, we shall be willing to receive the truth, by whomsoever it may be advanced. I am far from desiring to differ from every other denomination. Shall we reject the being of a God, because the abettors of endless torment advocate that doctrine? Some of our public laborers appear to think that in order to support our general system, we must reject every doctrine held by any other sect. But this thirst for innovation is extremely dangerous. It may show that they have a zeal, but it shows at the same time, that it is a zeal "not according to knowledge." We believe that many of our brethren have run into an extreme by embracing the doctrine of endless misery. And this very consideration ought to teach us caution, that we may avoid the other. Nothing is more natural than for men to go from one extreme to its opposite. And unless our denomination have exercised more wisdom than all which have gone before them, it is just to conclude, that some of us, in coming off from endless misery, have carried our views into the other extreme. Surely, that person would be wanting in modesty, who should assert that every denomination but his own, embraced nothing but error. There is not that difference between the various theories, which some people imagine. The fundamental doctrines of the gospel are embraced by almost every denomination, how much soever they may differ in explaining them.

A truly wise man will always endeavour to improve by the virtues and foibles of others. And as we are sensible that many religious teachers have dwelt too much upon the threatenings of divine inspiration, it becomes us to beware of the other extreme. A middle course is generally preferable. The gospel of Jesus Christ, though a dispensation of mercy, has threatenings as well as promises. The author of this dispensation was anointed by the Father, to proclaim *the day of vengeance of our God*, as well as the acceptable year of the Lord.\* The Christian minister is to persuade men by the *terrors of the Lord*,† as well as to beseech them by the *mercies of God*.‡ Now if we dwell exclusively upon the promises of the gospel, we go counter to divine instruction. If we make no other use of the threatenings than to explain them away, and convert them into assurances of pardon, we weaken the motives of our holy religion, and injure the cause we are laboring to support. These remarks, I think, will strike you as self-evident truths.

The success of any cause depends much upon the course pursued by its public advocates. And, although I can say with pleasure that you have done much to extend the cause of liberal Christianity, and have been eminently successful in rectifying false notions relative to the character of God, and the destination of mankind, still I have the mortification to say, that I think you have carried your principles too far. Had you confined yourself to scripture phraseology, and been content to say, in the language of the apostle, that the economy of divine grace will be accomplished “in the dispensation of the fulness of times,” I should have rejoiced with joy unspeakable. But when you limit the benefits of the gospel to this state of existence, and thus fix “the times

\* Isa. lxi. 2.

† 2 Cor. v. 11.

‡ Rom. xii. 1.

and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power," I feel impressed by a sense of duty to enter my feeble protest. I do not mean, however, by these frank remarks to call your sincerity in question, or to injure in the least, your moral or religious character. Personal attacks and unfriendly insinuations always betoken an improper spirit, and injure the cause of the person who uses them. Every thing of this nature I shall endeavour to avoid. But if, in the ardor of debate, the writer should unfortunately adopt them, it is freely acknowledged that it would not redound to his honor, nor promote the interest of his cause.

Having introduced the subject with these desultory remarks, I will now call your attention to a particular statement of the theme in debate. The question is, not whether men are punished in this world, but whether they receive *all* their punishment here; not whether they are punished here for their sins *generally*, but whether they are punished for *every* sin they commit; not whether *some* are fully recompensed on earth, but whether this is true of the *whole human kind*. All passages and arguments, therefore, which go to prove that men are punished in this state, have no bearing in the case; they must prove that *every individual receives all his punishment in this world, or that he will receive none after death*, or else they prove nothing in this controversy.

That men are accountable for their actions to the Author of their being, is plainly taught in the scriptures, and demonstrated by universal experience. To assert the contrary is downright Atheism. If there is a God then, to whom we are accountable, it presupposes that he has given us a law as the rule of our conduct; and a law supposes a penalty which must be inflicted in case of transgression. The very idea of accountability, therefore, teaches us that virtue will be rewarded and vice punished, here or hereafter. Rewards and punishments

grow necessarily out of accountability ; and all the punishments inflicted by God are founded upon the same principle.\* Now if it be cruel in God to punish men *according to their deeds in a future state*, it is equally so in the present. And on the other hand, if punishment apportioned to our deserts, inflicted in this world, be not only just, but merciful, then punishment founded on the same principles, will be just and merciful in a future state. We do not pretend that punishment in a future state, differs either in nature or design from punishment inflicted in this world. Men after death are not punished on the principles of revenge or retaliation, but with a design to humble and reform ; or, in other words, to qualify the creature for the enjoyment of happiness. We do not believe that those will be punished in a future state, who have been duly punished, and have become penitent here ; no—this discipline will be experienced by none but those who have not been equitably recompensed in this state, and who go out of the world in rebellion. Now on this view of the subject, what reasonable objection can be brought against a future, disciplinary punishment, which does not weigh equally against all punishment in this world ? Why then are you so averse to this sentiment ? You will agree with me that virtue and happiness are inseparably connected. Now religion is valuable only as it makes men happy, that is, as it makes them *virtuous*. Why then insist so strenuously that all punishment is confined to this world ? Do you really think that this sentiment is more productive of piety and virtue than a future limited discipline ? Can you lay your hand upon your heart, and say in the presence of God, that you think a future retribution corrupts

\* I will here state for the information of the reader, that I shall not, in this or any future Letter, labor to prove any position which is held in common by the writer and him to whom these Letters are addressed.

the morals of society; that it weakens the motives to virtue, and leads to the perpetration of crime?

In the discussion of the question before us, much has been said about the ground of the controversy, and the method of argumentation. You maintain that all the labor of proof devolves upon the believer in future punishment. You insist that future punishment must be proved true, or else you are justified in believing the opposite; and when you are called upon to produce the evidence in favor of your scheme, you complain that this is burdening you with proving a negative, which is incapable of proof. In a discussion of this question with Mr. Turner, you say, "Although you persist in contending that it is incumbent on me to prove the negative of our general question, I am still disposed to maintain the reverse, and to contend that it is incumbent on you to attempt to prove the positive of our general question by the testimony and word of divine inspiration. Until this is done, and the doctrine of future punishment is proved from the word of God, this doctrine is not entitled to our belief."\*

Again you say, to prove positively and directly that all misery is confined to this life, "is, to say the least, throwing all the labor on one side."† Now, Sir, if to prove that all misery is confined to this life, is "throwing all the labor on one side," then to prove that men will be punished after death, is "throwing all the labor on the other side." This then is the only ground on which you will consent to meet your opponent in this controversy; he must go forward and prove his doctrine true—he must pursue a course which according to your acknowledgement, is "throwing all the labor on one side." He must pursue a plan which appeared to you "so unreasonable," that you rejected it at once.‡

\* Gospel Visitant, Vol. 3, p. 312.

† U. Magazine, Vol. 4, p. 20.

‡ Ib. p. 20.

The course which you have adopted, is pursued by all the principal advocates for your views. They all decline producing any evidence in favor of their system, being, as would seem, determined to "throw all the labor on one side." Mr. Kneeland says, "It is not pretended, as we know of, that the scriptures prove there will be *no future punishment*; for how can they prove a *negative*?"\* From these citations, and to these others might be added, it appears that you consider our system as the *positive*, and yours as the *negative* of the question before us. But permit me to ask you, have you no *positive* to your faith? does your doctrine consist entirely of negation? does your faith rest solely upon disbelief? One would think so by your method of meeting this discussion. When you are declaring your views to the world, you are not at all deficient in *positive affirmation*; but as soon as you are engaged in controversy on this subject, your doctrine is all *negation*! But, Sir, you cannot be insensible that in questions of this nature, the positive and negative are transferable from one side to the other. If the doctrine of future punishment is advanced, that side of the question becomes the positive, and yours the negative. But if the doctrine which limits all punishment to this world, is advanced, then that becomes the positive, and future punishment the negative of the question. Thus the great cry which has been raised about *proving a negative*, has no bearing in this case; because it can be used on one side as well as on the other.

But, Sir, the doctrine which bounds all punishment by temporal death, for which you contend, must be either a positive or a negative. Is it a negative? Then it is incapable of proof; then you have no evidence in favor of your hypothesis—not a solitary text of scripture,

\* Christian Messenger.

nor a single argument from reason ; then your system is only a negation, and your faith disbelief—a creed which would better become a sceptic than a professed Christian. Thus by pretending that your side of the question is only a negative, you in reality renounce all scripture evidence, and are compelled to say with Mr. Kneeland, “It is not pretended that the scriptures prove there will be no future punishment.”—But are your views a positive ? Then let us no longer be told, that future punishment must be proved true, or else it is not entitled to belief. If your scheme is a positive, then it is hoped that you will not refuse to meet us on this ground. You then have an affirmative as well as we, and you are under as great obligation to prove your affirmative, as we are to prove ours. Now if you refuse to meet us in this manner, you refuse to meet us on equal ground, and will give the public reason to make unfavorable remarks relative to your conduct, and the strength of your cause. I trust you will not attempt to support your side of the question by asserting that the scriptures are silent upon future punishment ; for this is only preparing a weapon for yourself. This is the popular defence which is set up by the abettors of your system. But in fact, it is acknowledging that your system is only a negation of belief. But popular as this mode of defence is, it is far from favoring those into whose service it is constantly pressed. This argument, if it deserves the name, may be retorted upon you with all its force. Thus, if you ask proof of future punishment, I will give you the silence of the scriptures on the opposite doctrine.

Feeling disposed to treat the subject with all possible fairness, I will endeavour to state the case in a manner which I think must be satisfactory to all candid inquirers, and objectionable only to those who fear to meet the subject on its proper ground. Let the question be, *Is*



*all misery confined to this life ; or does it extend beyond death ?* In this two-fold question, your opinion and mine are both stated. You believe in the affirmative of the first question, as much as I do in the affirmative of the last. And it is as incumbent on you to prove your affirmative, as it is on me to prove mine. This statement is so fair and equitable, that I cannot believe that you will object to it. But should you attempt to evade this statement as some have done, and insist that the question should be,—*Does the bible teach the doctrine of future punishment ?* I shall regard it as shrinking from the subject in debate ; or, to use your own words, as “throwing all the labor on one side.” And were I disposed, I could avail myself of the same art, and insist that the question should be—*Does the bible teach the doctrine of the happiness of all men at the article of death ?* In this way we might dispute eternally without coming to the merits of the question.

But I am not desirous of throwing all the labor on either side. I wish you to defend your system both positively and negatively, and I am perfectly willing to do the same. I should show the weakness of my cause by refusing to advance evidence in favor of my side of the question, and you would betray the same weakness by refusing to do the same on your part. I hope therefore I shall not be told that the burden of proof ought to be with the plaintiff ; for this again, is avoiding the question, as this plea can be made by us as well as by you. The doctrine for which I contend, is the doctrine as held by our order, from the third century down to the present day, with a very few exceptions. From this it would more naturally appear that you are the plaintiff, and we the defendant. We can call upon you, therefore, for proof, with more propriety than you can upon us. We are willing, however, to waive this right, and meet

you on equal grounds. The statement here made, is so fair and honorable, that I think it must meet your acceptance. I do not mean by any of these remarks to call your candor or sincerity in question, but only to suggest that you have been led to view the subject in an improper light. Neither are you to understand the above in the light of a challenge. My only design is to state the case in its proper light, to mark the course which ought to be pursued by all who controvert this question. The statement and examination of your system will be attempted in our next.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER II.

*Statement and examination of Mr. Ballou's system.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

Having stated the question in debate, and the ground of the controversy, I will now endeavor to state your system, compare its several parts together, and test them by the volume of divine truth.

Your system in brief, appears to be this ;—*Man possesses two natures, or principles, soul and body ; the one pure, the other impure. All sin originates in the flesh, and when the soul is dislodged from the body, it is necessarily pure, and consequently happy.* That this is a just representation of your views, will appear from the following quotations from your writings.

“The opposition of the law of the *heavenly man* to that of the *fleshly*, is meant by the prohibition.”\* “Sin is the fruit of the flesh.”† “*All sin originates in the earthly nature.*”‡ “It is to the powers and appetites of the flesh that *every sin* we commit, may be traced.”§ “The scriptures plainly indicate that the constitutional infirmities of flesh and blood are, in fact, the source from whence all sinful temptations arise.”|| “Now it is plain from scripture that *all sin, all wickedness, and all evil doings*, are the works of the flesh.”¶ “The mind, spirit, soul, or whatever the reader pleases to call the immortal part of man, that spirit being eternal and *immortally pure*, was opposed to the passions which would immediately rise from the *fleshly nature.*”\*\* “Another very.

\* Treatise on Atonement, p. 34.

† Gos. Visit. Vol. II. p. 187.

‡ Lect. p. 78.

\*\* Aton. pp. 32, 33.

† Ib. p. 49.

‡ Lectures, p. 74.

¶ Lect. p. 369.

great inconsistency is to suppose that after people shall have ceased from all the sins enumerated in the text, and are in a constitution of existence where no such crimes can ever be committed, they are there to be tormented for what they did in this world.”\* “The hearer is cautioned against supposing that we allow that the next state will be subject to sin ; we distinctly say that the evidence of this, is wanting both in scripture and reason.”† “As sin had its origin in the flesh and blood, and is the natural offspring of the lusts by which men are tempted, and as no intimation is given in the scriptures, that sin ever was, or ever will be committed out of flesh and blood, we venture to hope that sin will never exist after the present mortal state shall close.”‡

Here then we have your system before us : *that man consists of two natures, flesh and spirit ; that the flesh is the source of all wickedness, and the spirit is “immortally pure, so that the destruction of the body frees the soul from guilt.*

I will now state the grand basis on which you found your hypothesis. In your “Treatise on Atonement,” you attempt to make a distinction between the *creation* and *formation* of man. His *created* character was *spiritual* and *pure*, but his *formed* character was *earthly* and *sensual*. You say,§ “I have argued that the *formation* of man was after his *creation*, as appears from the account given by Moses, in Genesis. It seems reasonable to conclude that man, in a *spiritual* sense, was *created* in *Christ, the heavenly nature*, as his body was *formed* in *Adam, the earthly*. And as all our *bodies* came from that one *formation*, so all our *spirits* came from that one *creation*.” “If Christ be the image of God, and

\* Lect. p. 242.

† Lect. p. 409.

‡ U. Magazine, Vol. III. p. 150.

§ Aton. pp. 192, 193.

man was created in God's image, it is plain that man was created in Christ."\* "We are then informed by the sacred text, that God *formed* (not created) man of the dust of the ground."†

From these passages taken from your Atonement, it would seem that man was *first created a spiritual being, absolutely pure*; and was created in *Jesus Christ*: and that some time after his creation, God was pleased to *form* him of the dust of the earth, and from this earthly constitution all sin proceeds. This hypothesis, wild and visionary as it is, is the foundation of your system; it is the basis on which your whole scheme rests. This is what you introduce to solve the profound question, *Whence came evil?*

You maintain that man was first created spiritual and pure. But of the truth of this, you have not produced a particle of proof. You further state that man was created in Jesus Christ. What idea you mean to convey by saying that man was *created in Christ*, I am unable to determine. One thing however is certain, viz. that the evidence you adduce in support of this position is weak and inconclusive. The first passage you quote for this purpose, is Rev. iii. 14, where Christ calls himself, "the beginning of the creation of God." Wakefield renders the passage, "the *chief* of the creation of God." If this be its meaning, it furnishes no proof that Jesus Christ was created before men. But it is probable that St. Paul means the same, by "the *first born* of every creature," that is meant by "the beginning of the creation of God." And this he explains by saying, "he is the *beginning*, the *first born from the dead*."‡ Here the apostle explains "the first born of every creature," to signify "the first born *from the*

\* Aton. p. 31.

† Ib. p. 31.

‡ Col. i. 15, 18.

*dead;*" that is, the first who was raised to immortal life. The passage therefore does not even prove that Jesus Christ was created before men. But if it should be granted that Jesus Christ was created before Adam, what has this to do with the point in question? If Christ was created before Adam, this furnishes no proof that Adam was created *in* Christ. I presume it will be conceded that angels were created before men. But does this prove that men were created *in* angels? According to Moses' account, it will be seen that the beasts of the field, fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea were all created before men; and it would follow from this, that men were created in the brutes, as clearly as it follows that men were created in Jesus Christ, from the position that he was the first of God's creation.

Because it is said by Moses that man was created in *the image of God*, and Christ is called by the apostle, "the express image of his person," you infer that man was created in Jesus Christ. Now this argument rests entirely on the principle that the same word has invariably the same meaning in every connexion in which it may be found. But no man of sober sense will admit such a position. Should you admit this principle, it would follow that Jesus Christ is the self-existent Jehovah, that Moses is the God of the universe, and that the Jewish rulers are the Supreme Being; for the same names and titles are applied to Jesus, Moses, and the Jewish magistrates in some passages, which in others are applied to the Deity. It would prove that Jesus Christ is literally a lamb and a lion, a shepherd, a vine, a door, a star, and at the same time a stone. It would prove that Job and Christ are one and the same being, for both are called God's *servant*. Nay, it would prove, that the words, *create* and *form*, have the same meaning in the first and second chapters of Genesis, because

they are used synonymously in other passages, as will be shown below. Now I cannot believe that you will contend for a principle which will disprove every proposition, and leave you in scepticism.

St. Paul, it is true, calls Christ the *image of God*, and the same Apostle says also that man is the *image of God*.\* Now this passage proves as clearly that man was created in *himself*, as you have proved that he was created in Jesus Christ; and the former is no more mystical than the latter. If any person has discernment enough to understand what is meant by man's being created, that is, first brought into existence, in Christ, I presume that he can understand what is meant by man's being created in himself. For my own part, I can form no conception of either. According to your views of the subject, the idea I am opposing is a leading feature in revealed religion. You make use of this notion to account for the origin of evil, to explain the doctrine of atonement, to show the nature of salvation, and to limit the extent of punishment. Your views of the *creation* and *formation* of man are, therefore, the fundamental article of revealed religion. And can we suppose that an article thus important would be wrapt up in mystery to that degree, that not one in ten thousand can understand it? The declaration, that man was first created in Christ, is to me utterly unintelligible, and I very much doubt whether any person whatever can form any definite idea upon the subject. If this be revelation, then revelation instead of enlightening, tends to perplex, darken, and bewilder the human mind. The doctrine of two natures in man appears to be too mystical for belief. You object to the Trinitarian notion of two natures in Christ. You reject it because it is so mysterious that no definite idea can be formed

\* 1 Cor. xi. 7.

upon the subject. But your doctrine is liable to the same objection. You regard the Trinitarian notion of two natures in Christ as a subterfuge to shield them from the arguments of their opponents. When any passage is quoted expressive of Christ's inferiority to the Father, they immediately say, this applies only to his human nature. This course, you strictly condemn. But you make use of the two natures in man in the same manner. The parable of the *wheat* and *chaff* you explain in the same way. The wheat signifies the *heavenly*, and the chaff the *earthly* nature.\*

To support the idea of two natures in man, you sometimes quote 1 Cor. xv. 45, 46, 47.† "The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." Whoever will take the trouble to read this passage in its connexion, will be sensible that the Apostle was speaking of Christ and Adam, and not of the two natures in man. But for the sake of the case, we will admit that Paul was speaking of two natures in man. The passage then, instead of favoring your views, is directly opposed to them. You maintain that man was *first* created a *spiritual* man, and *afterward* was formed a *natural* man. But the Apostle maintains the contrary. He says, "That was not *first* which is *spiritual*, but that which is *natural*; and *afterward* that which is *spiritual*." You contend that man was at *first* *heavenly*, and *afterward* by formation, became *earthly*. But Paul was of another opinion. He says, "The *first* man was of the *earth*, *earthly*; the *second* man was the Lord from *heaven*." Your opinion is so directly opposite to

\* Aton. p. 159.

† Notes on the Parables, p. 17.



that of the Apostle, that I shall offer no further comment upon the passage.

By examining the two first chapters of Genesis, I can discover no ground for the distinction you attempt to make between the *creation* and *formation* of man. You assert that after man was formed of the dust of the ground, he was a "partaker of flesh and blood, and possessed appetites and passions."\* Now the propagation of our species certainly requires the existence of flesh and blood, and appetites. St. Paul mentions adultery and fornication as the works of the flesh.† Remarking upon this passage you say, "These works, (i. e. adultery, fornication, &c.) are all the natural productions of our *fleshly, earthly nature*."‡ Again; "These are the sins which our fleshly minds are daily producing."§ Thus you acknowledge sexual intercourse to be the work of our fleshly, earthly nature. Without such intercourse our species cannot be propagated, and this work necessarily requires the existence of flesh and blood. Now man in his *created character*, as you term it, was commanded to propagate his species. As soon as man was created, he was commanded to "be fruitful and multiply," verse 28. Since procreation necessarily supposes the existence of flesh and blood, and bodily passions, the command to multiply in the created state, incontrovertibly shows that they were in a condition to comply; i. e. that they were composed of flesh and blood at their first creation. So that the distinction you make between *creation* and *formation*, appears to be unfounded. For we have seen that man in his created state, as you denominate it, possessed those very appetites which you ascribe to flesh and blood, and attribute to his *earthly nature*. It is expressly said, that man was cre-

\* Aton. p. 31.

† Gal. v. 19.

‡ Lect. p. 74.

§ Aton. p. 49.

ated *male* and *female*, verse 27. But I would ask, does this distinction exist among spiritual beings? Have we any account in scripture of male and female souls? Does our idea of spiritual intelligences harmonize with the work of procreation—a work which necessarily requires fleshly organs? Can we suppose—But I will drop this delicate subject.

What is there, I demand, in the account of man's first creation, which will not comport with a corporeal creation? The same terms and phrases in the same connexion, are applied in common to men and to brutes. Must we understand that the brutes also were created spiritual? It is said in verses 21, 22, that "God *created* great whales and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind. And God blessed them, saying, *Be fruitful and multiply*, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth." Now this language is precisely the same as that made use of to express the creation of man, and ought to be understood in the same manner. If the word *create*, when applied to man to express his introduction into being, signifies that his existence is spiritual, and not corporeal; then the same word in the same connexion, when applied to the brutes, ought to be understood in the same sense. There is no intimation in the account that this term has one meaning in one case, and another entirely different, in the other. After the fish and the fowls were created, they were commanded to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters and the earth. After man was created, he was commanded to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. Now if the fact that the brutes could propagate their species, proves, as all will admit, that they possessed corporeal bodies, then the same fact relative to man, proves that he possessed a

corporeal body, and that, at his first creation ; for immediately after his creation, he was commanded to multiply. If the phrase, *be fruitful and multiply*, when applied to brutes, is understood of a corporeal multiplication, then the same phrase, in the same connexion, ought to be understood in the same sense, when applied to men, since nothing to the contrary is intimated in the connexion. If we are allowed to interpret the same terms and phrases differently, when they are found in the same connexion, and when the subject does not require, but absolutely forbids it, we can make the scriptures mean what we please. Men and brutes were created in the same manner ; and you must either admit that the brutes were first created spiritual beings, or else give up this fundamental article of your system.

Again ; you say,\* "After God had finished his work of creation, consecrated the seventh day, and rested from his labor, we are informed that there was not a man to till the ground. 'This information is reasonable, and authorizes me to say, that as man stood in his created character, which is Christ, the heavenly man, he was not at that time formed of the dust of the ground, was not of the earth, earthly, and therefore was not a tiller of the ground.'" The sentiment here expressed is diametrically opposite to the account given by Moses. Instead of there being no man to till the ground, after the six days' work was accomplished, we are assured that no sooner was man created, than he was commanded, not only to increase and multiply, but to replenish the earth and *subdue it*. I cannot expose your statement more effectually than by giving the language of the historian. Verses 27, 28. "So God created man in his own image ; in the image of God created he him ; male and female created he them."†

\* Aton. p. 31.

† *Male and female created he them.* The learned Dr. Shuck-

And God blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and *replenish the earth, and subdue it*; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Upon this passage let it be observed, that this is the first account we have of the creation of man. Our first parents here stood in the created character, as you are pleased to call it. But instead of their being spiritual, we find they were distinguished by sexes, and commanded to propagate their kind. You say after the six days' work was finished, there was not a man to till the ground. But the language of our historian is entirely different. He informs us that man was commanded to replenish the earth, and *subdue it*, while in the character in which he was created. *Subduing the earth is tilling the ground*; and this, man was commanded to do on the first day of his creation. It was also on the first day of his creation, that dominion was given him over the brute creation. This is another proof that man was at first created with a corporeal body. Will you pretend that the brute creation were put in subjection to man while he was entirely detached from matter, and only a pure spiritual intelligence? Would such dominion be a blessing to spirits abstracted from all corporeal substances? The farthest from it possible.

ford, in his elaborate connexion between Sacred and Profane History, has the following remarks upon these words. "The Hebrew words might be translated—*the male and the female, he created them*; that is, he created both: not the male only, but the female also. The words of Moses are very plain; he tells us that God on the sixth day created the woman as well as the man. He does not say that God created both at the same instant, nor in the same manner; for this he distinctly considers in the next chapter. But he here hints to us, that God made both the male and the female within the time of this sixth day." See vol. IV. pp. 67, 68.

It is further evident, that our original ancestors were at first created corporeal beings, from verse 29—"And God said, (to Adam and Eve) Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; *to you it shall be for meat.*" Here we find that God provided man with *vegetables* for his food. But will you absurdly maintain that beings purely spiritual, feed upon vegetables? No, you will not. You say yourself, "it does not satisfy the soul, her food is of a different kind."\* Thus from the first chapter of Genesis we are taught that man was at first created an earthly, corporeal being, and distinguished by sexes; that he was commanded to propagate his species, and cultivate the earth; and that he might do this more effectually, God provided him with vegetables for his food, and gave him dominion over the brute creation.

The gross mistake into which I conceive you have fallen, arises from considering the *second* chapter of Genesis a *continuation of the history begun in the first*. Instead of its being a continuation of the first chapter, it appears to be only an *explanation* or *supplement* to the same account. In the *first* chapter Moses has given a summary account of man's creation; in the *second* he has given the *same account* in detail. As the subject of man's creation was vastly important, and as the account of that event was more brief, according to its magnitude, than the account of other events, Moses thought proper to enlarge upon this subject, and inform us of the manner of its accomplishment. Consequently in the second chapter he resumes the subject, and gives a circumstantial account of the creation of man. In the *first* chapter he tells us that man was made male and female; in the *second* he informs us of the process. He says the male was made of the dust of the earth, and

\* Aton. p. 32.

animated by the breath of the Almighty ; and that the woman was taken from the man. In the first chapter he informs us that man was commanded to *subdue the earth*; in the *second* he gives the particulars. He says that God planted a garden, and put man into it, *to dress and to keep it*. In the *first* he informs us that God gave man the trees and herbs for food ; and in the *second*, that man was permitted to eat of the trees of the garden. Let any unbiassed person read these two chapters with attention, and it would seem that he must discover that they both relate to the same event. Moses wrote as most of our military commanders write in these days. First by giving a summary of the event, and then by giving a detailed account of the same event. In this manner Moses wrote the history of man's creation; first by a summary, then in detail.\*

Our historian commences the second chapter by saying, "Thus," (that is, in the manner described in the first chapter) "the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." In the second and third verses, Moses gives an account of God's ending his work, and consecrating the Sabbath. Here Moses ends his summary or general account of the creation. You allege a clause in the fifth verse to prove that after the seventh day, there was not a man to *till the ground*. We readily admit that Moses declares there was not a man to till the ground. But he gives no intimation that this was after the seventh day. On the contrary, we

\* "The first and second chapters of Genesis," says Dr. Shuckford, "give us the whole of what Moses relates concerning the creation of mankind. Now we shall see that they accord perfectly with each other ; if we consider the first chapter as giving a short and general account of this great transaction ; and the second to be a resumption of the subject, in order to relate some particulars belonging to it, which, in the conciseness of the first relation, were passed over unmentioned." Connexion, Vol. IV. p. 67. "The second chapter is no more than a supplement to the former." *Ib.* p. 71.

have endeavored to show that the second chapter is only a supplement to the first. If this be the case, then the clause you cite, instead of applying after the seventh day, applies before. But let us examine the passage itself, with a view to ascertain the time to which the clause in question alludes. The fourth and fifth verses read thus—"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, *when they were created*; IN THE DAY that the Lord God made the earth, and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man *to till the ground*." Now let us ask, when was there not a man to till the ground? The passage shall answer. *In the day* that the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the plants and the herbs. By turning to the first chapter, it will be seen that the plants and herbs were created on the third day; and that man was created on the sixth day. So it was true that there was not a man to till the ground on the day in which the plants and herbs were created; for man was not created until the sixth day, that is, three days later. Thus we see that the fifth verse of the second chapter does not furnish a particle of proof in favor of your hypothesis; but, when taken in its connexion, goes directly to confirm the views we have advanced. Will you still maintain that this passage applies after the first week of the world, when the subject, the context, and every rational consideration forbid it? I think you will not.

I know of ~~no~~ argument which you adduce in proof of your hypothesis, which has not been examined, except the one founded upon the words, *create* and *form*. Because Moses in the first chapter uses the word *create*, and in the second the word *form*, you take it for granted that these terms express ideas entirely different from

each other. But we have already endeavored to show that the same is meant by *creating* in the first chapter, that is meant by *forming* in the second. The subject and connexion put the same meaning upon both terms. I have already shown that the word *create* is, in the first chapter, applied to the brutes as well as to men; and if it necessarily signifies bringing into *spiritual* existence, in one case, it must signify the same in the other. Nay, the argument you draw from these terms to prove that man possesses two natures, the one spiritual and pure, the other earthly and sinful, proves that the brutes also possess two such natures. Moses, it is true, says in the first chapter of Genesis, that God *created* man, and in the second chapter, that he *formed* him. And he says precisely the same concerning the brute creation. Chap. i. 21. "And God *created* great whales, and every living creature." Chap. ii. 19. "And out of the ground the Lord God *formed*\* every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air." Here then the same brute animals are said to have been *created* in one chapter, and *formed* in the other; and if this circumstance relative to man proves that he possesses two distinct and dissimilar natures, it proves the same concerning the brutes. But will you contend that the brutes possess two distinct natures, the one immortally pure, the other sinful? I think you will not. You will probably admit that when Moses, in the second chapter, says the Lord *formed* the brutes, he alluded to their being brought into existence, which is expressed in the first chapter by the

\* Dr. Shuckford has the following remarks upon the word *formed*. "We say *formed*, in the *perfect* tense; but the Hebrew *perfect* tense is often used in the sense of a *preterpluperfect* to speak of things done in a time past. The Syriac version is rightly rendered, God *had* formed; for the creatures were made before man." Thus our learned author understands the word *form* to have the same meaning as the word *create* in the two first chapters of Genesis. See Connexion, Vol. IV. pp. 67—71.



word *create*. If this then is the sense relative to the brutal, it is undoubtedly the sense relative to the human creation. Besides, in the second chapter it is expressly said that the woman was *made*. "And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from the man, *made* he a woman, and brought her unto the man," verse 22. It is manifest from this passage that Moses has expressed what you call the *formation* of man by the word *make*, a word which is certainly synonymous with *create*. You contend that man was *created* in the image of God. But when the divine Being addressed Noah after the flood, and fixed the penalty of murder, he assigns this as a reason: "For in the image of God *made* he man."\* Here it is expressly said that man was *made* in the image of God. And Moses, as we have seen above, declares that the woman was *made* from the man. Hence it is apparent that the distinction, for which you contend, was unknown to our historian. And if we inquire into the scripture use of the terms *create* and *form*, we shall find that the sacred writers use them to signify one and the same thing. When speaking of men, they use these words promiscuously to express their introduction into being. They pursue the same course, when speaking of inanimate nature. The Lord by the prophet says, "I *form* light, and *create* darkness; I *make* peace, and *create* evil."† It is obvious that the words, *create* and *form*, are used synonymously in this scripture. It is also worthy of remark, that God is represented in the first chapter of Genesis, to have *created* that very light, which he is here said to have *formed*. In a great variety of instances, God is said to have *created* the heavens and the earth. But the psalmist expresses the same thing by the word *form*. Addressing his Maker, he says, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst *formed* the earth or the world, even from

\* Gen. ix. 6.

† Isa. xlv. 7.

everlasting to everlasting thou art God.”\* The earth itself, therefore, is said to have been *created* in one passage, and *formed* in another. But shall we maintain that the earth possesses two natures? that it was first created spiritually, and then that the earth was *formed of the dust of the earth*? This would appear like trifling with the subject, but it appears to me to be just as consistent, as the distinction you make between the creation and formation of man.

I think, Sir, that a person must have a strong inclination for the marvellous, to discover your favorite distinction in the two first chapters of Genesis. Even you yourself, when this part of your system is out of sight, admit the views for which I am contending. You acknowledge that our bodily appetites were *created*. Your words are: “Our appetites and passions are at all times with us: and they are all good in the place for which they were made, and for the use for which they were created.”† In this very Lecture, you maintain that all appetites and passions are a part of our earthly nature; and you here expressly say that these appetites were *created*; consequently the creation and formation of man are one and the same thing. In fact, I know of no distinction which you can make between the words, *create* and *form*. You would probably explain the word *form* to signify to *compose*, to *organize*, or put together of materials which are already in existence. And I would ask, what different sense you can put upon the word *create*? You cannot say it signifies to make out of nothing; for you do not allow such a creation.‡ So upon the whole I very much doubt whether you can put any signification upon the word *form*, which will not apply equally to the word *create*.

We have now examined the two first chapters of

\* Ps. xc. 2.

† Lect. p. 79.

‡ Aton. p. 90.

Genesis, on which you found your notion of two natures in man, and find no authority for its support. We have seen that there is no more evidence that man was created in Jesus Christ, than there is that he was created in himself; that the two first chapters of Genesis allude to the same events; that there is no more proof that men were created spiritual beings, than there is that the brutes were created such; that what is ascribed to man in the first chapter, is as indicative of a corporeal body, as what is ascribed to him in the second; that the words *create* and *form* have one and the same meaning in Moses' account, and that on your system it is hardly possible to give them different significations; that all your arguments prove too much, and of course prove nothing at all;—In a word, that your whole scheme of two distinct, complex natures in man, is nothing but a phantom too mystical for belief.

Having shown that the idea of two natures in man, the one created and pure, the other formed and sinful, is unfounded, we will now inquire further into the truth of your repeated assertion, that *all sin originates in the flesh*. Though you lay this down as an axiom, it is a position which is by no means admitted. Before attending to this particular, we will observe, that this is a necessary part of the two natures in man. This grows out of your notion of the *formation* of man. If what has been offered against that visionary idea be valid, the point we are now upon, is already decided. Every argument which weighs against one, opposes the other. Now we ask proof of the assertion that all sin originates in the flesh. This assertion, though constantly made, is not accompanied with evidence. You will probably say, that sin arises from lust, and lust originates in the flesh. To this let it be replied, that lust, or temptation, *self-considered*, is not vicious. It is no crime in me that an *evil suggestion* presents itself to my mind. It is the

assent of the mind to the suggestion, or the resolution to commit the act, which constitutes the criminality. The body is a mere instrument in the hands of the mind, if I may so express it. An act of the body, considered by itself, is neither virtuous nor vicious. It is the motive or disposition of the mind, which gives the character to the act. Take away the motive of the mind, and the act has no more character, either good or bad, than the drawing of the breath, or the motion of the eyelids. This is the common sense of mankind; this principle is ever admitted in all courts of justice.

If sin lies in the act of the body, then the surgeon who amputates, is as guilty as the felon who breaks a limb of his victim, and the sheriff is as guilty as the murderer he executes. But there is no end of examples of this nature, all of which show the absurdity of the principle I am opposing. It is so obvious that sin lies in the motive of the mind, and not in the act of the body, that it seems a waste of time to labor this point any further. You yourself, when your system is out of view, contend for the principle I here advocate. When opposing the infinity of sin, you say, "It will be granted on all sides, that no action, *unconnected with design*, ought to be considered sin; it is then an evil *intention* that constitutes an evil action. For instance, a man exerting himself to the utmost of his abilities to save the life of his neighbor, accidentally takes his life; the consequence is not the guilt of murder, but a heart-aching grief for the loss of his friend. Again, a man exerting himself with all his ingenuity and strength to take the life of his neighbor, misses his intention, and saves his life from immediate danger; the consequence is not the approbation of a good conscience for having saved the life of his neighbor, but condemnation for having designed his death, and perhaps mortification in his disappointment. By these instances the reader may

see that no act can be determined to be morally good or evil by the consequences which follow, but *only by the disposition or intention which the actor possesses, when the act is done.*"\* Again you say, "The fact is, the moral distinction between virtue and vice, is the difference between *meaning well* and *meaning evil.*"†

In these passages you declare in the most unequivocal manner, that every moral act proceeds from the *evil intention, disposition, or motive* of the *mind*, and not from the act of the body. According to your confession, an act is criminal, not because it was suggested by any bodily appetite, but because the motive of the mind was evil. You say that an act can be determined to be good or bad, "only by the disposition or intention" of the actor; and this you lay down as an established principle, which "will be admitted on all sides." Thus, Sir, when your mind is free from the bias of system, we find you advocating views which appear rational and self-evident to every reflecting man. You ascribe all moral actions, and consequently all sin, to the evil disposition of the mind. And if all sin proceeds from the evil intentions of the mind, then surely it does not proceed from the appetites of the body. As it is unphilosophical to admit of any effect without an adequate cause, so it is equally unphilosophical to ascribe any effect to *more than one adequate cause.* So after ascribing every sinful act to the evil disposition of the mind, it would be absurd to ascribe it to any other cause. Once more; you ascribe sin to ignorance. Your words are these—"Ignorance was and ever is the cause of sin."‡ I will not in this place attempt to show the impropriety of this statement, but will observe that ignorance, as far as it is any thing, is a state or condition of the *mind*, and not of the body. Knowledge is a mental acqui-

\* Aton. pp. 21, 22.

‡ Lect. p. 10.

† U. Mag. vol. IV. p. 153.

tion, and as ignorance is the opposite of knowledge, so it must be a state, not of the body, but of the mind. Hence sin cannot proceed from the body.

Perhaps you may say, though the *immediate* cause of sin may be the evil design or motive of the mind, still its *more remote* cause may be the wants and appetites of the flesh, for without these no evil action would be committed. This does not affect the argument in the least. For if the wants and appetites of our nature move us to action, this action is not sinful till such a character is given it by the motive or intention of the mind. We are free to acknowledge, that the wants of our nature move us to action, and this activity is a duty. Our wants then only impel us to action, and were it not for the evil disposition of the mind, we should act aright. For instance, the appetite, hunger, prompts us to obtain food, but it does not prompt us to steal. Theft is suggested by the evil disposition of the mind, and not by hunger; for hunger would have been as well satisfied with the food obtained lawfully, as with that got by stealth. The most that can be said of our appetites, is, that they impel us to action; but whether the act is good or bad, depends *entirely on the intention of the actor*. If an act be criminal, because its remote cause is the wants and appetites of our nature, then all actions are criminal; for in a certain sense all actions proceed from the wants and imperfections of men. These remarks will meet your approbation; for you say, "The most distant of the immediate causes of sin, are the same as the most distant of the immediate causes of virtue." After instancing a case of two laborers, one of whom made a bad, the other a good use of his earning, you add; "The reader may see that those two men acted equally alike from their natural wants, appetites, and passions. Had neither of them any wants, appetites, or passions, neither of them would have done any thing

at all. Therefore we see that want, appetite, and passion in one produced *virtue*, and in the other, *vice*; but still the more immediate causes were not the same in both persons.”\*

Here you admit that sin arises from our appetites and passions no more than virtue. Good actions arise from ~~the~~ flesh in the same sense that bad ones do. So far, then, as actions proceed from the wants and appetites of our nature, so far they possess no moral character; so far they are neither virtuous nor vicious. The same earthly nature which produces one, produces the other also. But you say, “the immediate causes are different.” True, but what are these immediate causes? They cannot be our appetites and passions; for you acknowledge that these produced virtue in one person. If appetites and passions produced virtue in one, and vice in the other, then they could not be the sole cause of either. There must be some other cause which renders one action good, and the other bad. And what is this cause? You have confessed that it is the *disposition* or *motive of the mind*, and that only, *which renders an act vicious*. Thus it will be seen according to your own confession, that sin does not arise from the flesh, any more than virtue, and that all sin is produced by the evil disposition or motive of the mind. After the arguments I have adduced, and these concessions on your part, what becomes of your numerous assertions, that *all sin arises from the flesh*? Will you still maintain that idea, and continue to contradict what you have said in these passages?

But there are various other arguments which might be alledged to confute this notion. If vice lies in temptation or the possession of appetites, then Jesus Christ was a sinner; for the Apostle testifies that *he was tempted in all points as we are*, and yet without

\* Aton. pp. 41, 42.

sin.\* This text furnishes us with demonstrative evidence that sin lies not in temptation or the possession of appetites, but in something else. And what can this be? It is an evil disposition, which Jesus did not possess. Christ was without sin, because no evil disposition existed in him. Thus we see that temptation makes no part of sin. Sin lies wholly in the disposition of the mind. Again, if the soul is always pure, how shall we introduce the Christian doctrine of *regeneration*? Surely you will not pretend that it is the body, which is to be regenerated.

When you maintain that all sin originates in the flesh, you imply that the soul is always pure, and free from all moral defilement. This is not only implied by your statement relative to the source of all iniquity, but you expressly state that the soul is eternal and *immortally pure*. This is no misrepresentation of your views. For when you argue that there can be no sin after the body is destroyed, the whole strength of the argument rests upon the principle that the soul is always pure in itself; and when you assert that all sin arises from the flesh, you virtually say that the soul is not sinful. And this you confirm by saying directly that the soul is *immortally pure*. And further; the distinction you attempt to make between the creation and formation, goes directly to show that you believe man to be pure in his spiritual or heavenly nature. You have recourse to man's formation to account for the existence of moral evil. These things then show us plainly that you maintain that the *soul is always pure*. I will however do you the justice to admit that you have, in many instances, contradicted this; but still this does not affect what you have plainly stated in other parts of your writings.

I will lay this down then as a leading article in your scheme, *that the soul is always pure*. You admit that

\* Heb. ii. 18. and iv. 15.



the *soul*, *spirit*, and *mind* signify one and the same thing.\* Now we have already seen that you admit that all sin arises from the *evil intention* of the *mind* or *soul*. How then can you pretend that all sin arises from the *flesh*, and that the *soul* is immortally pure, and at the same time insist that the *evil intention* of the *soul* alone produces every vicious act? You tell us that the *soul* is *immortally pure*, and then tell us in the very next breath, that "the powerful vibrations of the *fleshly nature* immediately absorbed his *mind*, (that is, his *soul*) he sought to the *carnal man* for food, eat and died."† Again you say, "When the creature-like nature leads the whole man captive, it is then that the *soul* is in a state of *unreconciliation* and *death*; but when the heavenly child whispers heavenly invitations to the *soul*, the *soul* immediately ceases to confer with *flesh* and *blood*."‡ You say the *mind* is the *soul*, and yet you say again and again, that the *carnal mind* is the source of all evil, and constitutes the *devil*.§ Thus, Sir, does the *soul* of man, which you represent immortally pure, become, according to your own acknowledgment, *absorbed by the flesh*; nay, it *confers with the flesh*, becomes *unreconciled* and *dead*, is the *source of all evil*, and constitutes the *devil*!! It is rare that we find a gentleman of your talents and reputation as an author, contending thus warmly both for and against the same proposition.

I am almost tempted to distrust my own senses, while examining what you have said upon the subject. At one time all sin arises from the body, at another from the mind, and then from ignorance; at one time the *soul* is always pure, at another it confers with the *flesh*; now it is heavenly, and then constitutes the *devil*. These adverse statements, and the distinction between the creation and formation of man, constitute a leading

\* Aton. p. 32.

† Ib. p. 33.

‡ Aton. p. 129.

§ Aton. Lect. &c. &c.

feature in your "Treatise on Atonement;" a work which has been highly complimented, and pronounced an "excellent and unanswerable work."\*

We will now inquire whether the scriptures countenance the sentiment that all sin originates in the flesh. St. Paul exhorts his followers to put on the *whole armor of God*; "for," says he, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood; but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against *spiritual wickedness* in high places."† In this passage the apostle represents *spiritual* wickedness as the most powerful foe to which man is exposed, and flesh and blood the most feeble. He exhorts us to put on the *whole armor of God*, and then assigns the reason why we must take to ourselves this powerful armor. *For*, that is, *because* we wrestle not against flesh and blood, those weak and feeble enemies, but against *spiritual* wickedness, that most potent of all foes. In this passage St. Paul represents *spiritual* wickedness as vastly more dangerous than flesh and blood united. Again, the apostle speaks of our walking in wickedness, "fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the *mind*."‡ To the Corinthians the apostle speaks of spiritual corruption. He exhorts them to cleanse themselves from all "filthiness of the flesh and *spirit*."§ In these passages, does the apostle teach your doctrine, that *all sin arises from the flesh*? He does not; he speaks of *spiritual* corruption, and the lusts of the *mind*; nay, he represents *spiritual* wickedness, as the *greatest* enemy to virtue and happiness. St. Paul to the Romans speaks of the lusts of the *flesh*. But we have already seen that the same apostle frequently speaks of *spiritual* wickedness, filthiness of the *spirit*, and lusts of the *mind*. From these

\* See Kneeland's Lectures, pp. 71, 96.

† Eph. vi. 11, 12.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

§ Eph. ii. 3.

passages it is clear that he believed in the soul or spirit's being corrupted. And can we suppose that the apostle has taught elsewhere, that all sin is confined to the flesh, in contradiction of what he has said in these passages? Besides, in the seventh and eighth chapters to the Romans, a portion of scripture on which you rely in no small degree to support your hypothesis, the apostle explains what he calls the *flesh* to signify the *carnal mind*. In chapter viii. verses 5, 6, 7, 8, the apostle says, "For they that are after the *flesh*, do mind the things of the *flesh*; but they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit. For to be *carnally minded* is death; but to be *spiritually minded* is life and peace. Because the *carnally mind* is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the *flesh* cannot please God." Here it is manifest that by the *flesh*, St. Paul means the *carnal mind*. He says "they that are in the *flesh* cannot please God." But how does he support this position? He infers it from the statement he had already made, viz. "the *carnal mind* is enmity against God." The apostle's argument therefore is this;—they that are in the *flesh* cannot please God, because the *carnal mind* is enmity against God. Now unless we admit that the apostle by the *flesh* meant a *wicked* and *depraved mind*, we destroy the whole force of his argument, and make him reason very inconclusively. Thus does the apostle ascribe all sinfulness, not to literal flesh and blood, but to an *evil disposition*, or *corrupt mind*.

St. James says, "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away with his own lusts and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."\* Though you quote this passage to support your favorite hypothesis,†

\* James i. 14, 15.

† Lett. p. 73.

nothing can be more foreign to your purpose. Two considerations clearly show that the passage does not favor your views. 1. The Apostle says we are tempted by *lusts*. But he does not say that these lusts are the lusts of the *flesh*. We have already seen that the sacred writers speak of the lusts of the *mind*, or *spirit*, as well as lusts of the flesh; and I have the same authority to say that these lusts are the lusts of the soul, that you have to say they are the lusts of the body. 2. But if it could be proved that the lusts alluded to, are the lusts of the body, it would not yield you that assistance you want. We have already seen that lust or temptation, *self-considered*, is not vicious. A man may be tempted, as Christ was, and still be innocent. The passage says, "*lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin.*" Here we learn that lust does not bring forth sin till after conception, i. e. the mind must assent and unite with the temptation, before any evil act can be performed. It is the assent of the mind, therefore which produces the sinful action. Were it not for the assent, or rather suggestion of the mind, men might be tempted, and this, instead of rendering them criminal, would confirm their virtue. Hence the Apostle says in the context, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." Thus does St. James confirm the views I have advanced relative to the source of sin.

But it matters not where sin originates; if the soul participates and becomes an accomplice with the body, as you have acknowledged again and again, it is sinful; it is corrupt, and the dissolution of the body can render it neither holy nor happy. It is a maxim of truth, that the *partaker is as bad as the thief*. And if the soul acquiesces and becomes an accomplice with the body, it is as culpable as though sin originated in the soul itself. So if it could be proved that all sin originates in the flesh, it would not afford you any relief. But we do not feel

constrained to make this concession. For we have already seen that this notion is destitute of scripture or reason for its support; that it involves many difficulties, and is acknowledged by yourself to be unfounded.

To expose your system still further, we will for a moment admit it to be true. But if the soul is always pure, and if the destruction of this earthly house exempts the soul from suffering, then salvation consists simply in throwing off the body. This you state as an article of your faith. "God has revealed his divine and glorious purpose of bringing man back from his formed state, and under the law of the earthly Adam, to his *original* created state, forever to be under the governing power of the law of the heavenly constitution."\* Here then we see in what your salvation consists. It consists in bringing men back from what you call their formed state, to their created state. And how is this to be effected? Only by the death of the body. But where, I demand, are we told in the scriptures, that this is the salvation Christ came to effect? Can any such passage be produced? I say there cannot. It ought also to be remarked that no man can be saved by Jesus Christ. Our Savior when on earth did not effect a complete salvation in any one. Even his own disciples, with whom he associated about three years, were not saved by him. Salvation you assert consists in being brought back from the formed state. Now on your system, the body owes its existence to the formation of man; and in order to bring man from this formed state, this body must be destroyed. Now inasmuch as Jesus never did, nor never will destroy men's lives, he can never be their Savior. He says himself that the Son of man is not come to *destroy men's lives*, but to save them.† In this passage it is expressly said that Christ did not come to *destroy men's lives*.

\* Aton. p. 141.

† Luke ix. 5, 6.

This, according to your system, must mean that he did not come to save men; for we have already seen that no man can be fully saved without destroying the body. I do not intend to misrepresent your views. I will therefore admit that on your plan Jesus Christ may do something towards effecting the salvation of some; those who hearken to his instruction in this world, may derive some good from his gospel; but still they are not completely saved by Christ. As all sin originates in the *earthly formed* nature, which is the body, so the most effectual and the principal means of deliverance from sin, is to destroy this earthly body. Complete salvation therefore cannot be effected without the destruction of the body. So Christ cannot be a complete Savior to those who hearken to his instruction in this world. And as it regards those who never hear of his gospel, or obey its requirements in this world, they are not saved by Christ at all. Since on your system all men are in a degree saved by death, and the salvation of most men is effected wholly by the dissolution of the human body, the declaration of Jesus that he came not to destroy men's lives, amounts to a plain declaration that he did not come into the world to save sinners! If salvation is effected by the death of the body, then Alexander, Cæsar, or Napoleon, might be called Savors with much more propriety than Jesus; for they have slaughtered, (i. e. "*brought back to their created state,*") millions of human beings, but Jesus never slaughtered one.

You assert that as all sin originates in the flesh, so when the body is destroyed, there can be no more sin, and consequently no more suffering. Now the whole strength of this argument rests upon the principle, that all sin originates in the flesh—a principle which is by no means admitted, and which ought not to be assumed without proof. Besides, we have already attempted the con-

futation of that position, how successfully is submitted to the reader. But if what has been offered in opposition to that doctrine be valid, this argument has been already refuted. But we will admit it true, and then notice some of the consequences. Now it requires no superior discernment to discover that in this method of salvation, Christ has no agency. If men are exempted from suffering necessarily from the dissolution of the body, if death translates them to a state, where pain is excluded of necessity, and happiness must be their portion, they are saved not by Christ, but by death. It is the immutable law of animal nature, that every thing which comes into the world, must suffer dissolution, and return to its kindred dust; and in the operation of this law of nature, Christ has no more agency than he has in the revolution of the earth upon her axis. If Christ exercises a saving power in the dissolution of the animal frame, then he is the Savior of the human, no more than of the brute creation. In what sense, I demand, is Christ the Savior of the heathen on your system? He does not save them in this world, for they never hear of him; he does not save them in the next, for death places them beyond the reach of pain, and brings them to the fruition of glory. They are saved by death, i. e. by a physical law of their nature; and if Christ had never made his appearance, their situation would have been precisely the same that it now is. I need not inform you that all who are saved, are saved by Jesus Christ, while the Scriptures expressly assure us that there is no other name than that of Christ, whereby we can be saved, and that there is salvation in no other.

Now on your scheme, instead of all men's being saved by Christ, he is the Savior of but a part of mankind. Were you a believer in the *Vicarious Atonement*, you might in some degree extricate yourself from this dilemma; but with your present belief you are destitute of

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that forlorn hope. Now by far the greater part of mankind on your system are saved by death, which has generally been considered the *destroyer*, rather than the *Savior* of men. The heathen and all who die impenitent, are brought to the fruition of boundless felicity at the moment of death; and that not because they have repented of the sins they have committed—not because they have exercised genuine faith in the Lord Jesus—not because they have obtained that knowledge which is life eternal—nay, not because Jesus was appointed as a Savior; but because they have been slain by a law of nature in which Christ has no agency. I might go still farther, and say, as no man is fully saved or brought from his formed state, while in the body, so Christ is not, in strictness of speech, the Savior of any human being, but all are saved by a physical law of nature. Your position that death frees the soul from sin, supersedes the means of the gospel. The Scriptures assure us that unless we *repent*, and are *converted*, we cannot enter heaven. But what has repentance to do with the salvation of multitudes on your scheme? If death places a man beyond the reach of pain, and introduces him into heaven, there is no repentance in the case. He is saved, not because he has repented of his sins, but because death has snatched him to glory. Thus do your views appear to set aside the scheme of salvation by Christ.

To avoid this difficulty, perhaps you may say that men are not saved by death, but by divine instruction imparted by Christ after death. Then let us hear no more of the boasted assertions, that the soul is necessarily happy at death; that our appetites and passions being destroyed, sin and its consequences must necessarily cease; and that death places us beyond the reach of pain. If men are saved by being instructed after death, the main ground of the controversy is changed,



and the arguments on which you have mostly relied, given up. If this position is urged, the other, viz. that death places us beyond the reach of pain, is relinquished. Now I ask proof of the assertion, that Christ will instruct all sinners in a moment at death, in such a manner as to qualify them for immediate felicity. I ask for one single text which asserts that men, who die in confirmed wickedness, will be totally changed in the instant of death; raised from the lowest state of moral corruption to that of immaculate purity. If men are saved by being instructed after death, then they do not escape all misery in a future state; for a process of instruction necessary to qualify the mind for the enjoyment of happiness, must of course, require a *period of time for its accomplishment*; and during this period the creature must be more or less unhappy. An infinite mind may grasp infinite knowledge in a moment; but finite minds are incapable of this. They obtain their knowledge by degrees. It requires but little knowledge of the human mind to know that all information is acquired in a gradual manner by finite beings as we are. This remark will meet your approbation; for you say, "I would further argue, that, as man is constituted to enjoy happiness on moral principles, to the knowledge of which principles we *come by degrees*, it is as reasonable to believe that all men were intended to obtain a consummate knowledge of the moral principles of their nature, as that any of Adam's race were."\* In this passage you admit that a *consummate knowledge* of moral principles is requisite to qualify the mind for complete happiness, and that this knowledge is acquired in a gradual manner.

Again you say, "Man exists on such a principle as renders him capable of *improving* in knowlege and

\* Aton. p. 183.

happiness, which he obtains by *experience*. We send our children to school for the purpose of learning that of which they are ignorant; and it is *by degrees* that those sciences are obtained. Men begin their moral existence in the *same way*—*but as fast as they become taught, they conform to the divine rules of their Master.*”\* Here again you admit that men are saved by knowledge which is *gradually* acquired, being obtained by experience, in the *same way* in which children obtain a knowledge of science, and that men conform to their divine Master *no faster than their knowledge increases*. According to your own acknowledgment, therefore, men cannot be completely happy, till they arrive at *consummate knowledge*; and this must require a *considerable period of time*, for you assert that this knowledge is acquired by *degrees*. Now, Sir, to affirm that those who die in confirmed ignorance and wickedness, will be consummately wise and perfectly pure the instant after death, is to speak without scripture authority, and to contradict every just principle of philosophy, and your own express declaration. That men will be thus instantly changed at death in a moral point of view, the scriptures give us not the least intimation. Beside, this view of salvation is the reverse of that taught in the scriptures. The sacred writers assure us that *without faith it is impossible to please God, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*† But if the vilest sinners are brought in an instant into the presence of God, where they must possess divine knowledge, it entirely excludes the exercise of faith. “Faith,” says an Apostle, “is the substance of things *hoped for*; the evidence of things *not seen.*”‡ Since faith is the substance of things *hoped for*, it supposes that those things are not already in our possession. In this manner the Apostle reasoned upon this subject.

\* Aton. pp. 190, 191.

† Rom. xiv. 23. Heb. xi. 6.

‡ Heb. xi. 1.

"For," says he, "we are saved by *hope* ; but hope that is seen, is not hope ; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for ? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."\* Again, as faith is the evidence of things *not seen*, it would be absurd to tell of men's exercising faith in an object already in their possession. Thus would your views exclude the means of the gospel, and introduce men into heaven in a way of which the scriptures are totally ignorant.

But probably you are ready to say that men are saved by the resurrection, and consequently by Christ. Be it so. This, however, is giving up both the other positions on which I have been remarking. For if men are saved by the resurrection, they are not saved by death's stopping their career of wickedness ; not by being instructed ; and I may add, not by faith and repentance. That this is a position which you sometimes take, may be seen by the following quotations. "The Apostle did not believe in a state of sin and misery after the resurrection, but a glorious state of life and immortality."† "It seems more proper to say that the resurrection into immortal life *effected the preparation for eternal felicity*."‡ In fact, it is a common saying with you that there can be no suffering after the resurrection. But let us attend closely to this subject for a moment. I wish to inquire when this resurrection takes place. The principal scripture you cite in proof of a resurrection, is first Corinthians, fifteenth chapter. The resurrection, according to this passage, is to take place or commence at *Christ's coming*. Now I will submit it to you to say when this *coming of Christ* did, or will take place. If you say it alludes to his *first coming*, or to his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, then it will follow that all men in all ages were raised to immortality at that period,

\* Rom. viii. 24, 25.

† Lect. p. 94.

‡ Gos. Visit. Vol. II. p. 138.

though it were hundreds of years before those now living, had a being ! But with all the absurdity attendant upon this view of the subject, future punishment is by no means avoided. If men were not raised to immortality until *Christ's coming*, then the old world, and Sodom, Korah and his company, Pharaoh and his host, and multitudes of others may have remained in suffering for a long series of years, between death and the resurrection. Again, if the resurrection is future, thousands may now be unhappy, being as yet destitute of salvation. Should you, to avoid this difficulty, contend that they may be made happy before the resurrection, I reply, then they are not saved by the resurrection, and the position now before us falls to the ground. The position that men are saved by the resurrection, must apply to all men, or else it is nothing to your purpose ; for if all are not saved by it, then some may remain in misery after the resurrection, and so your notion of no future punishment must be given up. To answer your purpose, then, it must apply to all men. And this resurrection by which all are to be saved, must be either past or future. If it be past, then it involves the absurdity that many thousands of human beings were raised to a state of immortality, hundreds of years before they had any existence ! And if it be future, then many may be in misery at the present moment, though they have been dead for thousands of years. So in either case, it is far from yielding you that assistance you want.

I know not how you can extricate yourself from these absurdities, unless you unite with the visionary Swedenborg, and maintain that each man is raised at the moment of death. This I think is the only course you can adopt. For the views you have advanced, relative to the *soul* of man, forbid your saying with the *materialist*, that there is no existence between death and the resurrection. I do not remember having seen any instance

in which you have directly advocated the notion of an immediate resurrection, though in some cases you seem to suggest such an idea.\* But in opposition to an immediate resurrection, we will urge the 15th chapter of first Corinthians. St. Paul through the whole chapter speaks of the resurrection as a future event. But if each man is raised at death, the resurrection was past as well as future. The Apostle also represents Christ as the *first fruits*, or as he expresses it elsewhere, "the first born from the dead."† But if every person is raised at death, Christ is far from being the first who arose from the dead; for thousands have arisen before him. St. Paul assures us that the resurrection is to take place at *Christ's coming*. Now let this coming be when it may, it evidently alludes to some particular period, and consequently the resurrection cannot take place with every man at his death. And further; the Apostle assures us that when the dead are raised, those who are alive on the earth, shall be changed to immortal beings. Hence it is demonstrably evident that the resurrection is yet future. Again: on the day of Pentecost St. Peter cites from the Psalms a passage expressive of the resurrection, which he applies to Jesus Christ. To show that David could not apply this passage to himself, the Apostle informs us that David had not yet ascended, i. e. had not arisen from the dead.‡ Thus it may be seen that the resurrection does not follow immediately upon death. St. Paul to Timothy speaks of certain impostors who are filled with *profane and vain babblings*, and who have erred from the truth, saying, "the resurrection is *past already*."§ It is not at all probable that these impostors pretended that men then living were raised from the dead; their only meaning, we may presume was, that those who

\* U. Mag. Vol. 1. Dialogue between a Lim. and a Univ.

† Col. i. 18.

‡ Acts ii. 26—34.

§ 2 Tim. ii. 18.

together, as though they were in perfect unison with each other!

But perhaps you will attempt to maintain a consistency by saying that you predicate your views, not on either of these positions separately, but on all united. This then, is confessing that neither of them separately is sufficient to support your system; so that all arguments resting upon either position alone, are not to be admitted as full proof of your views. This reduces your proof to a chain of three links, each of which must be sound, or the chain is broken. Now if any flaw can be found in either of these links, the chain is broken as effectually as tho every link were destroyed. And all that we have urged against these positions separately, will apply with equal force, if they were united. This ground then is only subjecting you to greater inconveniences; for instead of having one position to maintain, you have three. This perhaps may induce you to rely upon one only. But remember that whenever you urge either of the positions, you renounce both the others.

I have now closed my examination of your system, and what has been offered is submitted to the reader. If I have effected what I attempted to effect, i. e. to show that it has no support from scripture or reason, but is in opposition to both; that it is inconsistent with itself, and acknowledged by yourself to be unfounded, it must surely fall. It is hardly necessary to examine your arguments, for if the foundation on which they rest is sapped, their force is entirely obviated. But as you have several arguments which you keep constantly in view, I will examine them at large in the next Letter.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER III.

*Examination of Mr. Ballou's arguments.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

As was proposed in my last, I will now attend to some of the principal arguments on which you rely for the support of your system. The first argument I shall notice is this;—*As sin and misery are inseparably connected, and as there will be no sin after death, so there can be no punishment.* That this is an argument on which you rely, will be seen by the following. “As sin had its origin in flesh and blood, and as no intimation is given in the scriptures, that sin ever was or ever will be committed out of flesh and blood, we venture to hope that sin will never exist after this present mortal state shall close.”\* This quotation will justify the argument stated above. And although there is a taking plausibility in this argument, and those of your views place great dependence upon it, still I trust that it can be made to appear that it is as false, as it is specious.

Upon this argument we remark—1. This argument is founded upon the principle that all sin originates in the flesh, and that death saves the soul. But in the preceding Letter, it has been proved from scripture, reason, and your own acknowledgment, that all sin arises from the *evil disposition* or *intention* of the *mind*, and not from the flesh. We have also seen that if death qualifies a man for heaven, he is not saved by Christ, but by a physical law of nature. This has been stated at large in my last, to which the reader is referred. And if what is there advanced be conclusive, then this argument is already refuted. For if the foundation be destroyed, whatever rests upon that basis must fall.

\* U. Mag. Vol. III. p. 150. See also Lect. pp. 14, 242.

2. The argument before us is also founded upon the principle, that all criminality ceases as soon as the sinful act is performed ; a principle repugnant to the scriptures, and the common sense of mankind. No man is a sinner until he has committed sin, and unless the criminality outlives the act, then guilt is as momentary as the act. And hence all punishment inflicted in this world, is cruel and vindictive, if it continue one moment after the crime is perpetrated. This principle would destroy all society, and fill the world with rapine and blood, should it be reduced to practice. Human laws cannot take cognizance of an act until after it is committed, and if criminality ceases with the act, then all punishments inflicted by human laws are unjust and cruel ; then human laws are engines of oppression, and ought to be repealed. Thus, Sir, would this principle destroy all government and law, and introduce a state of general anarchy and confusion. But this principle, dangerous as it is, is the basis on which your argument rests.

The divine law, it is true, is not thus confined. That can punish us *in* the perpetration of the crime as well as *afterwards*. But tho the divine law can and generally does punish the sinner in a degree, while in the act of transgression, thousands of instances can be produced in which men are punished by the divine law long after the commission of the crime. You contend that Cain was punished for the murder of his brother by being a *fugitive and vagabond* in the earth ; but was all this inflicted upon him while in the very act of murder ? Surely not. When treating upon the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, you say, "For nearly *eighteen hundred years* the Jews have wandered in outer darkness in consequence of this blasphemy, and how much longer they are to continue in this unhappy situation, none but our merciful Father in heaven knows."\* Here then, instead

\* Lect. p. 144.



of limiting the criminality to the time in which the act was committed, you continue the punishment, and consequently the guilt, for *ages of ages*, even upon their innocent offspring. With what propriety, I demand, can you maintain that it would be unjust to punish a man in a future state, who is taken out of time in the very act of murder, when you insist that the poor Jews have already been punished nearly two thousand years, for a crime of which they were innocent and knew nothing—a crime in which they had no agency—committed hundreds of years before they had a being? But to return—In the case before us, you acknowledge that the guilt does not cease with the act, but continues hundreds of years.

In your devotions you undoubtedly use that model of prayer left us by our Savior, and say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, *forgive us our sins.*" By this you acknowledge yourself a *sinner*, though you are not in the perpetration of any sin. You will acknowledge that prayer is a duty, and by laying your confessions and petitions before God, you are in the discharge of this duty. But still, while in your devotions, that is, while faithfully discharging your duty, you confess yourself to be a *sinner*; a sinner in consequence of sins committed before that period. Thus you acknowledge that criminality outlives the act of committing sin. You confess that a man may be a sinner after the sinful act is committed, though at the time he may be performing an act of virtue. As in the case of prayer, so in other cases, a man, though then in the line of his duty, may be a sinner in consequence of sins committed before that time. You acknowledge that sinfulness outlives the sinful act, and thus admit a principle which saps the foundation of your argument.

The term *sin* signifies not only the act of wickedness, but the evil disposition which produced it, and the

corruption or depravity which it continues upon the mind. A person who has formed a design to murder, is as much a murderer at heart, as though the crime were committed ; and if he cherishes a murderous, that is, a hateful disposition after he has taken life, he is as much a murderer then, as he was while in the commission of the crime. Every man who has committed sin, is a sinner, and will always retain that character, until he repent. If I committed murder ten years ago, I am considered and treated as a murderer at the present day, by him who knows the thoughts and intents of my heart, unless I have repented and reformed. And a man who goes out of the world in the perpetration of such horrid crimes, will be a murderer in a future state, unless it can be proved that he reforms in the instant of death. But you say a man cannot be a sinner after he has ceased sinning. I reply ; a murderer confined in a dungeon, has not only ceased from murdering, but is in a situation, where perhaps, he can commit no actual transgression. But does this render him holy ? Is every wretch to be regarded as a saint, simply because he has no opportunity of pursuing his villainies ? The principle you advance proves this, or else it is nothing to your purpose. But perhaps you will say that by *ceasing from sin*, you mean not only ceasing from actual transgression, but from a sinful disposition, and depraved feelings. To this I reply,

3. This is a mere begging of the question. For if sin and misery are inseparably connected, then to say there are no sinners in a future state, is precisely the same as to say there is no punishment there, which is no argument, but a bare assertion and a begging of the question. Sin and misery being inseparably connected, if it can be proved that men will be punished in a future state, it will follow that they are sinners there. There is no need of actual transgression in a future world, to consti-

tute men sinners in that state. If they die in a state of alienation from God, they are sinners after death, though they may commit no actual sins in that state. We shall endeavor to prove hereafter that men will be punished in a future world, and proving this will prove that men retain sinful characters in that world. St. Peter says, the Lord knoweth how to *reserve* the unjust unto the *day of judgment to be punished*. Thus it may be seen that men may commit sin in this state, and be reserved to a future state to be punished.

But your argument, if admitted, would prove too much, and consequently prove nothing. It weighs as much against future happiness, as against future misery. Virtue and happiness are as closely united as sin and misery. Were I desirous of proving that there would be no future happiness, I could adopt your argument in all its force. Thus—as virtue and happiness are inseparably connected, and as all benevolent actions, such as feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, are confined to this state, so there can be no happiness after death. By this argument, future happiness can be disproved as clearly as future misery. The scriptures give no more account of virtuous actions being performed in a future state, than they do of vicious ones. We have no account of relieving the distresses of mankind in a future state, and according to your argument, there can be no happiness in that state. If you say that virtue may exist in principle in a future world, notwithstanding there may be no opportunity to perform benevolent acts; it is replied, the same may be said of vice. Your argument above is frequently presented in a philosophical dress, thus;—Sin is the *cause* of misery; the *cause* ceases at death; the *effect*, therefore, must cease at death also.—We have already shown that sin lies in the motive or disposition of the mind, and not in the act of the body. Now to say that this evil disposition ceases at death, is

assuming the point at issue. Let it be proved that the mind becomes pure in an instant at death, and the conclusion will follow with some degree of propriety. But upon this argument I will remark ;—The very idea of *cause* and *effect*, supposes the effect *posterior* to the cause. The signification of the terms proves this. To say then that the effect must cease the instant the cause ceases, is destroying all ideas of cause and effect. There may be many *intervening* causes between the *first* cause and the *final* effect. That which is the effect in relation to the *first* cause, becomes the *cause* to the *following* effect. To assert, therefore, that the *final* effect will cease in an instant with the *first* cause, is unphilosophical in the extreme. That this may appear clear, I will instance a case. Suppose a person's flesh is lacerated at the whipping-post. Now the rod may be considered the first cause of the pain. But will the pain cease the moment the rod is withheld ? Your argument proves this, or else it proves nothing to your purpose. But the fact is, there is an intervening cause between the rod and the pain. The wound which is the *immediate* effect of the rod, becomes the *proximate* cause of the pain ; and this pain will not cease with the *first* cause, but will continue until the *proximate* cause be removed. Now in the dispute between us, sin is the cause of misery, but there are intervening causes ; sinning depraves the heart, and thus depravity or guilt must be removed before the misery will cease. We have now examined your argument, and have seen that its whole strength rests upon a position which is assumed without a particle of proof, but in opposition to the scriptures and your own confession ; that it involves principles which would overthrow all civil government ; and that it disproves future misery no more than future happiness.

Your next argument which I shall notice, is drawn

from the promise to Abraham. You say, "The promise made to Abraham is the substance of the gospel. But in this promise there appears to be no intimation of the doctrine of future punishment. If it be necessary for the Christian to believe in the doctrine of future punishment, why was it not equally necessary for the father of the faithful to embrace this indispensable article?"\* Your argument, briefly stated, would be this;—*There can be no punishment after death, because it is not threatened in the promise to Abraham.* This, I confess, is a new and strange argument. No future punishment, because it was not mentioned in the *promise* to Abraham! We might as well say, there is no future happiness, because it was not mentioned in the *woe* pronounced upon Judas. We do not expect to find the extent of a retribution clearly stated in those passages which treat exclusively upon some other subject. But in the promise to Abraham there is nothing said of punishment in this world, but shall we conclude from this circumstance that men are not to be punished here? But you appear to think that every truth contained in the gospel dispensation, must have been made known to Abraham. But, Sir, it is impossible for us to decide *a priori*, what God ought to have communicated to Abraham. We have no positive information that Abraham had a definite idea of the nature of the blessing promised, or of the sufferings, death, and the resurrection of the Savior by which this blessing was to be effected. And I might adopt your language and say, *If this be necessary for the Christian to believe, why not for the father of the faithful?*

The promise in question overlooked all the means, and spoke of the *end*. It says that all nations *shall be blessed*. But it does not mention the process by which this blessing is to be effected. But although the means are not alluded to in the promise, St. Paul tells us that they are

\* Gos. Visit. Vol. II. p. 109.

to be blessed with *justification through faith*.\* By this passage we learn that the promise to Abraham included means, tho those means were not stated in the promise itself. And who can say that a future disciplinary punishment was not one of those means? The Lord revealed to Abraham more than is recorded by Moses, or he did not. If he did not, then Abraham was ignorant of many truths which have been made known to Christians by the gospel. And it is no more absurd to suppose that Abraham might be ignorant of the doctrine of future punishment, admitting it true, than that he was ignorant of other truths which are brought to light by the gospel. But if the Almighty revealed more to Abraham than is recorded by Moses, who knows but that future punishment was also revealed to him? We shall endeavor to show in the sequel that the Jews were believers in a future punishment, and it is altogether probable that Abraham did not differ from the rest of the nation in this respect, especially as they looked to him as their guide and director.

But after all, the promise to the fathers cannot be well understood without admitting a future discipline. The promise asserts that all nations shall be blessed in Christ. And as many nations became extinct before the appearing of Christ, it is manifest they were not blessed in Christ in this world; and hence the blessing must extend into a future state. If the inhabitants of the old world, for instance, were translated to glory by the flood, they were saved by death, and not by Christ. For it would be absurd to say that Jesus Christ, after his appearing in the world, saved those who had been in heaven two thousand years. It appears therefore, that the promise before us overlooked all the means, and consequently future punishment among the rest, and spoke of the final consummation of the gospel; and that the old

\* Gal. iii. 8.

world, for example, will receive a chastisement after death, before they will come into the enjoyment of the blessing. This is clearly taught in St. Peter's account of Christ's preaching to the "spirits in prison," which will be treated of in a subsequent Letter, to which the reader is referred.

The next argument which claims our attention is drawn from the case of Adam, Cain, the old world, Sodom, Korah, Pharaoh and Judas.\* The argument drawn from these examples, is this:—*in all these cases, though punishment was inflicted, there is nothing said of punishment after death; hence there is none.* As all these cases furnish precisely the same argument, we shall treat them together, or rather select one as a specimen. I will therefore call your attention to the case of Sodom. 'Tis true that there is no intimation in the nineteenth of Genesis, where Sodom's destruction is treated of, that the Sodomites would be punished after death. But are we authorized to infer from hence that no such punishment awaited them? If the silence of these scriptures on the subject in question, be evidence that there is no future punishment, then the silence of the same scriptures on the subject of future existence, is evidence that there is no existence after death. Thus does your argument, on which you rely with no small share of confidence, disprove a future state of being, as much as it does a future state of punishment. But perhaps you will say in answer to this, that punishment was the theme spoken of, and if punishment in a future state awaited them, it is natural to suppose that it would have been mentioned, whereas the duration of man's existence was foreign to the subject. To this I answer, the punishment, as in the case of the old world, Sodom, Korah, and Pharaoh, was to terminate their earthly existence. This rendered

\* Lect. pp. 8, 311, 315, 316, 317, 319. Gos. Visit. Vol. II. p. 190.

the *duration of existence* a theme in view, as much as the duration of punishment. And as man's earthly existence was ended by this punishment, it is as natural to suppose that a future state of being would have been mentioned, if it were true, as that a future punishment would have been mentioned, if that were true. Endless existence is certainly a subject of as much importance as a future limited punishment; and destroying man's earthly existence would seem to cut off a future existence much more naturally, than punishment in this world would cut off punishment in a future state, endless existence being admitted. And as these scriptures are silent upon future existence, it is natural to suppose that they might be silent upon future punishment. And this silence in the one case, proves as much as in the other. It destroys a future state of being as much as a future state of punishment.

But probably you will say, that it is derogatory to the character of God to admit that his children are exposed to a punishment of which he has given them no intimation. It would argue cruelty on the part of the Deity, if he should punish Cain, Sodom, &c. in a future state, when he had given them no intimation that such was the penalty of his divine law. To this we reply, any argument however plausible it may appear, must be given up, if it contradicts plain matters of fact. Now your argument is this; that God never punishes his creatures with any punishment, without first informing them that such a punishment would be inflicted in case of transgression. But this statement is contradicted by sober facts. Cain was punished by being a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and Sodom by being destroyed with fire from heaven, when neither Cain nor the Sodomites had any intimation beforehand that such would be their punishment in case of transgression. But though the Lord gave them no particular intimation that such



would be their punishments in case of transgression, yet these punishments were actually inflicted. And if God could inflict these punishments without giving any previous intimation of them, he could inflict a punishment in a future state, and one would not impeach his character any more than the other. Thus do the very cases before us furnish a sufficient answer to your argument.

But if the old world, Sodom, Korah, and Pharaoh were introduced immediately into heaven, then they were saved by death, and not by Christ; so that the declaration that Christ is the *Savior of the world*, must be used in a restricted sense. In relation to the old world, St. Peter informs us that they were in *prison* in the days of our Savior; and with reference to the Sodomites, the same Apostle says, that they were *reserved to the day of judgment* to be punished. But these passages will be considered in a future Letter. Most of the cases you have mentioned, instead of opposing a future retribution, show the propriety and need of such a measure. Take Sodom for example. Though we are taught that there were not ten righteous persons in that city, still I presume you will agree with me that this was spoken with reference to adults, and not to infants. There were in all probability many innocent infants in that city. But according to your views these little innocents were punished as severely as the greatest adults in wickedness. And among those who are denominated wicked, there was in all probability a considerable difference in their characters. Some were of course much more vicious than others. But they all fared exactly alike. One common destruction befel them all. Now as God has declared that he will reward every man according to his works, it is manifest that unless a future retribution takes place, the inhabitants of Sodom are not dealt with according to their moral characters. The same remark will apply to

Pharaoh and his legions. Though the scriptures assure us that Pharaoh was obstinate and hard-hearted, we have no reason to believe that all his troops possessed this character. But still they were destroyed as well as he. Since the virtuous and the vicious were destroyed alike, it argues the necessity of a retribution beyond death. Besides, in the case of Sodom, Korah, and Pharaoh, their only punishment was *instant death*. But do you regard temporal death as a punishment for sin? No, you do not. You maintain that temporal death results from a mortal constitution, and is no punishment for sin.\* The Sodomites, &c. would have suffered temporal death, if they had been as virtuous as the Apostles of our Lord. So that according to your own acknowledgment, they were not punished at all. Their deaths, instead of being more aggravating than ordinary, were more easy. They were taken away in a *moment*. Their destruction, therefore, was no punishment at all; but in fact, was a means of rendering their departure out of time more easy than it would have been, had they been virtuous. Now with what propriety can you call that a punishment for sin, which, in fact, you maintain is no punishment, and which lessens the pains of temporal death, and introduces men into heaven much quicker than they would otherwise have been?

But according to your views, while these abandoned wretches were thus rewarded (I say *rewarded*, for surely that cannot be called a punishment, which lessens the pains of death, and introduces men sooner into heaven,) for their iniquity, the righteous were left in this state of affliction. The Lord then was as merciful, nay he was vastly more merciful to the wicked than to the righteous. Thus if all men are introduced into heaven at death, then the inhabitants of the old world were snatched to *immediate felicity* as a reward of their

\* See Lect. p. 93. Aton. p. 59.

wickedness, and the righteous Noah was left in this world of woe; then the wicked Sodomites were *cursed with immortal glory*, and the just Lot was *blessed with pain and distress*; then the rebellious Korah was instantly conveyed to heaven, and those who were obedient were left in the desert; then the hard-hearted Pharaoh and his oppressive legions were translated in an instant to the paradise of God, and the oppressed Israelites were left to wander in the wilderness; then the treacherous Judas was introduced into glory by suicide, and so arrived at heaven sooner than his Master.

Perhaps the above paragraph may sound harsh to some of the abettors of your system, but on close examination I think they will find it a plain, undisguised view of your system in relation to these cases. I have reviewed the paragraph with attention, and acknowledge that I do not see, but that it is the legitimate offspring of your belief. Your discernment will enable you to discover that the portrait is just, though the visage may appear a little repulsive. At any rate, if it can be shown that these consequences do not follow from your views of these cases, I will pledge myself to retract them.

Another example from which you draw the same argument, as in the above cases, is the *threatenings denounced upon the house of Israel under the law*. But as this example contains several ideas not found in the other cases, I have thought proper to reserve this for a separate consideration. You say that all the threatenings denounced upon the Jews, in the law of Moses, were confined to this state of being. In the twenty-sixth of Leviticus, in particular, we have a long, circumstantial account of the judgments which were threatened upon the Israelites, and these are said to be according to their sins, and yet are all confined to the earth.\* The argument is briefly this;—there can be no

\* Lect. p. 303. Sermon on 1 Peter iv. 17, 18. p. 9, &c.

punishment after death, because the judgments threatened in the law are temporal. Now this argument, if it proves any thing, proves that there can be *no happiness* after death; for all the blessings in the law are temporal as well as the judgments. You say yourself, "It is worthy of *special regard*, that the divine *promises* and threatenings, recorded by Moses and the prophets, with which God was pleased to signify his approbation of righteousness, and his disapprobation of sin, relate to *blessings* and punishments, which have been enjoyed and suffered by the house of Israel *in the earth*. For their encouragement the Lord promised them all manner of *temporal blessings*; and as a terror, he threatened them with all manner of temporal calamities.\*

Here then we have your acknowledgment that the law is as silent upon future happiness, as it is upon future misery; and if this silence proves any thing relative to future misery, it proves the same with regard to future happiness. And it is not a little surprising that you and those of your sentiment should insist so much upon an argument, which, instead of supporting your system, overthrows your system, and Christianity with it. If we inquire into the nature of Moses' law, we shall find it a civil or political institution. It was a temporal institution introduced for the benefit of the Jews as a nation. Now as the ritual of Moses was nothing more than the civil or political government of the Jewish nation, it is natural to suppose that its penalties would be of a temporal nature. Temporal or political sanctions are the best suited to temporal or political institutions.† Since the Mosaic law was a

\* Lect. p. 303.

† Dr. Tappan offers the following, among other reasons, why temporal rewards and punishments were the best adapted to the Mosaic economy.

1. "There was no need of incorporating with the Jewish ritual a new and express revelation of a future state; because such a

political or civil code, we may naturally suppose that its penalties will be of a temporal nature. But what has this

state had already been notified to the world by nature and reason, assisted by early revelation and tradition, and had also been discovered to the Hebrews by special communications made to their pious ancestors. Agreeably, the belief of the soul's immortality, and of future rewards and punishments, was interwoven with the idolatrous system of the ancient heathen. On this principle they deified the souls of their eminent men, and consulted the dead. The same general belief appears to have been early and constantly entertained by the Hebrews. Saul's effort to obtain counsel from the spirit of departed Samuel, was founded on this belief. The Jewish law proceeds on this principle in forbidding necromancy and consulting the dead.

2. "As this law was ceremonious and temporary, it was fitly enforced by temporal rewards. As it was given chiefly in pursuance of the peculiar covenant made with Abraham and his seed, a covenant which insured to them the land of Canaan, and great worldly prosperity in it; we plainly see that sanctions best suited to this covenant were temporal blessings or judgments, in the country which Jehovah had thus granted them.

3. "These temporal sanctions directly struck at the root of idolatry, and destroyed its principal support. For it was the leading sentiment of those early times that worldly prosperity was inseparably connected with a strict observance of their idolatrous rites, with a devout worship of the stars, of demons, of tutelar deities, and that a contempt of these gods, or a violation of their institutions, would be punished with temporal calamities. Even the Israelites, as appears from their history, were deeply infected with this vain and pernicious idea; and this was the main source of their frequent relapses into idolatry. To eradicate this fatal error, it was necessary that their divine Lawgiver should denounce and inflict the same penalties on those who deserted his worship, which were supposed to follow the neglect of the pagan deities; and that he should promise and conspicuously grant the opposite blessings to those, who, abjuring their former idolatry, acknowledged and obeyed him as their only Sovereign; in short, that he should hold up full evidence, that he was the sole Dispenser both of good and evil. This was to destroy idolatry with its own weapons; it was to tear away the grand props on which it rested, and to transfer them to the opposite side, viz. to the support of that allegiance, which is exclusively due to Jehovah.

4. "If the rewards and punishments of a future life had been annexed to the Hebrew ritual, this would naturally have led the Jews into a superstitious or exclusive regard to ceremonial duties, as if these alone could expiate moral guilt, and procure everlasting happiness." Lectures on Jewish Antiquities, pp. 23, 24, 89, 90, 297, 298.

to do with the doctrine of future punishment? The law of Moses did not even teach a future state of existence, and it would be downright contradiction to admit that the law was enforced by penalties extending into a future state, when the law did not reveal such a state. But the silence of a civil code on the subject of future punishment, is no argument against such a punishment. The laws of our country do not extend their penalties into a future state; but can we conclude from this that there is no future retribution? Because our legislators do not affix to the laws they enact, a penalty extending into a future state, would it be just to conclude that they are not believers in punishment after death? Surely not. You will readily grant that a great majority of our law-makers have been believers in a future retribution, notwithstanding all the penalties which they have affixed to their laws, have been temporal. Now may not this be true of Moses and the children of Israel, as well as of men in our own state and nation? They might believe in a future state of punishment, though their civil law said nothing upon the subject; and there would be no more absurdity in their case, than there is in ours. Suppose a person should attempt to disprove future punishment by the fact that the laws of Massachusetts do not extend their penalties beyond death. I presume you would regard the argument as weak and inconclusive. But to me it appears just as cogent as the argument you draw from the law of Moses.

But you say, Moses declared that this punishment should be *according to their sins*. Whoever will examine the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, will be sensible that all the promises and threatenings therein contained, relate to the Jews *as a nation*, and not as individuals. They were to be punished by discomfiture in battle, by famine, by being driven from their own land, dispersed among the heathen, &c. The very nature of these

judgments shows that they were *national* judgments. It would be absurd to admit that every individual was justly and equitably punished by such calamities as are mentioned in this passage. Take famine, for example. Who would suffer the most by such a judgment? Not the most vicious, but those who are in the most indigent circumstances. Now it is very far from being the case in any nation, that the most wealthy are the most virtuous. It most generally happens that those who possess an overgrown fortune are the most vicious. It very frequently happens also, that their wealth is the offspring of their wickedness; that their fortune is acquired by dishonesty and oppression. And on the other hand, we find in every country some of the most virtuous characters among the industrious poor. Now in the case of famine, it is manifest the poor would suffer the most severely. While the virtuous man, who is in indigent circumstances, is famishing for food, the rich man, who obtained his fortune by oppression, has bread enough and to spare. Thus it will be seen that such calamities are very far from being an equitable retribution upon every individual. A judgment of this nature may be perfectly just upon us as a people, but as individuals, it is far from being according to our demerits.

The same may be said of war. Though it may be a just punishment upon the nation, as a nation, it does not measure its penalty to every individual according to his moral character. Suppose we as a nation, should become corrupt, and God should permit the savages of the wilderness to overrun our country, and practise their accustomed mode of warfare. Now it is manifest that there would be some virtuous and good people among us, though as a nation, we were corrupt. But every person of common discernment must see that this judgment, though it might be just upon us, as a people, would not be apportioned to the demerits of every person. The

innocent women and children would in all probability suffer most. They, being the most helpless, would be the first to fall a prey, while the most abandoned of the citizens would perhaps escape their ferocity. Nay, the most unprincipled of all, would probably join with the barbarous foe, and imbrue their hands in the blood of their innocent countrymen. This has ever been the case when a nation has been overrun with a savage enemy. Some unprincipled wretches would join the enemy, and thus escape in a great measure; those cruel sufferings which the patriotic soldier and innocent female would be called to endure. Thus we see that such calamities do not fall upon every individual according to the degree of his moral turpitude. And as we have hinted before, when a pinching famine reigns in a land, the laws of equity are at an end, being superseded by the law of power. The strong will seize upon the possessions of the weak, and thus the daring wretch has enough and to spare, while the innocent and defenceless are famishing with hunger. These remarks must appear just to every person who has any knowledge of national calamities.

Now the Jews may experience those national calamities which are mentioned in Leviticus, and this may be a just punishment upon them as a nation; it may be as Moses expresses it, *according to their sins*, as a people, but as it regards individuals, it would be very far from being just and equitable. Another remark upon national punishments ought not to be omitted. Nations are not punished for their sins, till the measure of their iniquity is full. The Lord bears long with them, till their corruption is deep rooted. Now this national corruption is gradually acquired. So there may be many monsters of wickedness, who contribute more to the corruption of the nation, than any other citizens, and these may die before the deserved punishment falls upon the nation, and according to your views, be taken to consummate



felicity, and their innocent descendants and countrymen may be left to suffer those evils, which, in a great measure, were brought upon their country by their own horrid wickedness, and corrupt example. This principle is exemplified in the case of the Jews, who you say,\* have been punished nearly two thousand years for the blasphemy committed by the Pharisees in the days of our Savior.

Now the judgments threatened in the twenty-sixth of Leviticus give no support to your system. This chapter does not even insinuate that there will be no punishment after death. But when we consider that these judgments are national, and that national judgments, though they may be *according to the sins* of the nation, as a nation, do not fall equally upon every individual, according to the demerit of his crimes, but generally fall heaviest upon the innocent and defenceless. We then see the necessity of a future retribution, to render the ways of the Lord equal. I say, when we consider that the judgments mentioned in Leviticus are of such a nature, that it is morally impossible for them to recompense every individual according to his just deserts, we are furnished with an argument from hence in favor of a future retribution. For as the judgments generally fall heavily upon the innocent and defenceless, while many of the most corrupt, escape them entirely, unless a retribution in a future state be admitted, we cannot

“Vindicate the ways of God to man.”

Now, Sir, it is to be hoped that you will no longer use an argument to disprove future punishment, which if it proves any thing, would overthrow christianity itself by disproving a future state of existence; an argument which, when strictly examined, shows the necessity of a future retribution, to enable us to vindicate the charac-

\* Lect. p. 144.

ter of God. I will conclude my reply to this argument by observing that the law of Moses threatens the greatest temporal punishments, even death itself; but St. Paul carries the gospel penalty further. He tells us that those who tread under foot the Son of God shall receive a *sorer punishment than death without mercy*.

I will now attend to some passages of scripture which you cite as direct proof of your system. But before noticing any passage, I will observe that by quoting any passage of scripture, to prove directly that all misery is confined to this life, you give up the plea you frequently make that your side of the question is a negative. So in future, I trust that we shall not be told that it devolves upon us to prove our system true, while you have nothing to do but to examine our arguments. The first passage which claims our attention is Proverbs xi. 31. "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner." Now this passage simply says, that virtue and vice have a reward in this state. This we are ready to admit; but this is not the point at issue. The question is, do men receive *all* their punishment here? And in support of this, the text is nothing. I might with propriety dismiss the passage with the above remark, but as you seem to attach great importance to this scripture, I will offer a few words more upon the subject. The book from which this passage is taken, is a collection of maxims, the truth of which will hold good in common cases. This will appear from the very title of the book. A *Proverb* is a *general truth*, but it will not bear a strict application in all cases. We have many maxims among us, which are founded in wisdom, but still cases frequently occur in which they will not hold good. Proverbs, when they are interpreted as general truths, are of great utility, but when applied strictly, they are, of all language, the most likely to mislead.

Now in the book from which this passage is taken, Solomon has collected several hundred proverbs, the result of his wisdom and experience. These proverbs were not designed to teach us the doctrine of Christianity, but to afford us a variety of useful maxims for the common concerns of life; and, with a very few exceptions, they apply to this world. I will illustrate my views of the Proverbs by a few examples taken from the very chapter in which the passage before us is found. Verse 9th—"A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor." This as a proverb, is true, but it will not hold good in every case. There are some hypocrites whose characters are so well known that their word is not regarded in the least, and consequently their influence will injure no one. Verse 10th—"When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth; and when the wicked perish, there is shouting." This is so far from being true in all cases, that the reverse is frequently the fact. Cities do sometimes lament the death of a wicked person, and rejoice at the calamity of the good man. Verse 12th—"A man of understanding holdeth his peace." No person will interpret this to signify, that the wise man never speaks at all. Verse 14th—"In a multitude of counsellors, there is safety." This as a proverb is founded in wisdom. It is true, interpreted on the principle I have mentioned, but applied strictly, it is not correct in all cases. For the largest bodies of men have often been deceived, and a host of counsellors cannot always insure success. Verse 15th—"He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it." Will any one pretend that this is always the case? They will not, if they have any knowledge of human events.

Now hundreds of examples might be produced from the Proverbs of Solomon similar to those I have cited, where you will not pretend that Solomon had any reference to the doctrines of the gospel, or that the passages

will bear a strict application. From this view of the Proverbs, it will appear that the passage before us was not designed to teach the extent of a retribution, but only to teach what generally happened, in a greater or less degree. So that the passage simply means, that in the common concerns of life, virtue is generally rewarded, and vice punished. By what authority I ask, do you apply this passage to a doctrine of the gospel, and give it a strict interpretation, when at the same time you acknowledge, that Solomon almost uniformly spoke only of the common affairs of life, and even then, his language will not bear a strict application. That system must surely be weak, which has nothing for its support but the rigid application of the maxims of Solomon—maxims which were never designed to teach us doctrinal points. And my astonishment is a little excited when I find that you rely more upon the maxims of Solomon, to support your views, than upon all the rest of the Old and New Testament. That men do not receive all their reward in this world is evident from many passages of scripture. Jesus says to the afflicted, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward *in heaven*."\* How can it be maintained that the righteous receive all their reward on earth, when the inspired teachers assure us that they shall have a *great reward in heaven*? That men will be both rewarded and punished in a future state, will be shown hereafter.

But, Sir, if you understand the passage strictly, it will be nothing to your purpose. "The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; *much more* the wicked and the sinner." Now if you understand the passage strictly, according to the letter, it would amount simply to this; The righteous shall receive all they deserve in this world, and the sinner shall receive *much more* than he deserves! Thus does this passage yield you no as-

\* Matt. v. 12.

sistance on either interpretation. If it be understood in the light of a proverb, it simply means, that in the common affairs of life, virtue generally brings comfort and respect, and vice generally meets with disapprobation; and if it be understood literally, it involves the absurdity, that the wicked receive a *greater* punishment than they merit. There is nothing in this passage to express a retribution but the word *recompense*, and this word, applied to sinners, signifies nothing more than that they shall be punished. Now I ask, does a passage which asserts that men *exist here*, prove that they will not exist *hereafter*? Every sane man will answer in the negative. I ask again, does a passage which asserts that men are punished here, prove that they will not be punished hereafter? The answer must be the same. In a word, the term *recompense* must include all that men deserve, or it must not. If it does not, then it is nothing to your purpose; for men may be punished in a future state, though they have received some punishment here. But if the term *recompense* does include all that men deserve, then the passage involves the absurdity that the wicked receive *much more* than they deserve. Now, although you pronounce the exposition I have given of the passage, "a most palpable absurdity,"\* I will submit it to the reader to determine whose exposition is the most consistent and rational.

The next passage which claims our attention is Eccl. xii. 7. "Then shall the dust return to the dust as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." This passage you adduce in support of your views.† The remarks already made upon the writings of Solomon, will apply to this passage. It was not the design of the wise man to give us a systematic view of the doctrines of the Bible, but only to give his views upon the com-

\* Lect. p. 298.

† Lect. p. 361.

mon concerns of life. In order to a right understanding of any portion of scripture, it is necessary to examine the connexion in which the passage is found, and if possible, to learn the object the writer had in view. If we apply this wholesome rule to the passage before us, we shall learn that Solomon was not treating upon the condition of man, after death, but was inculcating early piety. He begins the chapter by saying, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not." From the first verse to the seventh, he speaks of the troubles, trials, and death to which more advanced age was peculiarly subject. Now the whole scope of the argument is this;—Remember thy Creator while in youth and health, before trouble, sickness, and death overtake thee. This is clearly the wise man's argument. To suppose that he hath, in the seventh verse, taught the final condition of man after death, is to admit that he introduced something totally foreign to the subject. Besides, Solomon commands us to remember our Creator, before the *evil days* come, and then reckons the *day of death* among the *evil days*. But surely if death translates every person to immediate glory, it ought to be considered a *happy*, rather than an *evil* event.

The whole strength of your argument rests upon the presumption that the word *spirit* means the *immortal soul*. But you cannot be ignorant that the term spirit, has various significations in scripture. Sometimes it means the disposition, and sometimes *wind, air, or breath*. In the latter sense it is used by Solomon in the very book in which the passage in question is found. "Who knoweth the *spirit* of a man, that goeth upward, and the *spirit of the beast*, that goeth downward to the earth."\* Here the word spirit is applied to the brutes, as well as to men, and consequently must signify something which men hold in common with brutes. By spirit is probably

\* Eccl. iii. 21.

meant *breath*; for surely it cannot signify the *immortal soul*, which brutes have not. So the passage in question probably means, when the body returns to its original dust, the breath returns to its kindred atmosphere. But if you understand the word spirit to signify the immortal soul, it would only involve you in difficulty. The passage seems to teach that both body and spirit, at death, return to their original state, and become as they were before creation. "Then the dust shall return to the dust as it was," that is, as it was before creation; "and the spirit shall return to God who gave it," as it was before creation. The passage, therefore, understood in your own way, would teach, that at death, the spirit or soul would return to its original state, and become as it was before it existed, that is, it would cease to exist in an individual capacity. Besides, you think it very absurd to say that sinners are to be punished out of the presence of God, since God is omnipresent.\* According to your representation of omnipresence therefore, if the spirit goes to a state of misery after death, it goes to God, since he is every where present.

There is one passage more from Solomon, that I will notice, not because I consider the text of any consequence at all in this controversy, but because you seem to present it as something formidable.† The passage is this;—"Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive." Eccl. iv. 2. It is truly surprising that a gentleman of your talents should lay hold of a passage like this. Nothing, I am persuaded, but the want of evidence elsewhere, would have induced you to cite a passage so foreign to your purpose. As this text does not even intimate that all misery is confined to this life, or that there will be no punishment after death, I shall offer no comment upon it, but will cite another passage from the same book, which

\* Sermon on 2 Theas. i. 7, 8, 9.

† Lect. p. 360.

affords as much evidence of future punishment, as this passage does of the opposite doctrine. "For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope; for a living dog is better than a dead lion." The remarks already made upon Solomon's maxims, will apply to both the above passages. There is one passage in the New Testament on which you place great reliance.\* The passage is Rom. vi. 7. "He that is dead is freed from sin." Your argument rests solely upon the presumption, that the death here spoken of, is the death of the body. But if it can be made to appear that the death spoken of in the passage, is not temporal death, your argument is entirely destroyed. In order to a right understanding of this text, it is necessary to observe that the apostle very frequently speaks of the literal death and resurrection of Christ, and then makes use of them, as *figures* by which to represent our *death to sin*, and *life to holiness*. You think, because the apostle alludes to the literal death of Christ, that the death spoken of in the 7th verse, must be temporal death. But this is very far from being the case. St. Paul says in a certain instance, *I die daily*. It will be admitted by all that this death is not temporal death. For it would be an absurdity to admit that Paul died a temporal death every day. But still I would inquire, from what subject did the apostle borrow the term *die*, which he uses in this passage? He borrows the term from temporal death. But no one will pretend the apostle meant temporal death in this passage, because he borrows his language from that subject. And so in the sixth chapter of Romans; the apostle speaks of the temporal death of Christ, but uses it as a similitude by which to represent our *death to sin*.

With this principle in view, let us attend to the sixth of Romans, where the passage before us is found. The apostle begins the chapter by saying, "What shall we

\* Lect. p. 363. U. Mag. Vol. III. p. 131, 150, &c.



say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are *dead to sin*, live any longer therein?" Here then we learn the subject of which St. Paul was treating. He was speaking upon a *death to sin*, and not of the death of the *body*. Having introduced the subject, viz. a *death to sin*, he illustrates it by the literal death and resurrection of Christ. Verses 3d and 4th—"Know ye not, that so many of us, as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also *should walk in newness of life*." The apostle in these verses speaks of the death and resurrection of Christ, and makes them a simile of our death to sin, and life to holiness. His argument is this—As Christ died and rose from the dead, so ought we, who profess to be *dead to sin*, to "walk in newness of life." This argument he enforces by verse 5th—"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Having stated the death and resurrection of Christ, the apostle applies the principle to the moral state of the Romans. "Knowing this, that *our old man is crucified* with him, that the *body of sin might be destroyed*, that henceforth *we should not serve sin*." Verse 6th.—Here the same death is spoken of; *crucifying the old man, and destroying the body of sin*, signify the same as being *dead to sin*, mentioned in the preceding verses. This verse teaches us in the plainest manner, what death the apostle was treating of. It was a *death to sin, crucifying the old man, or destroying the body of sin*.

We have now noticed all the verses of this chapter, from the first up to the passage in question. And that the reader may have the whole subject before him, I will observe, that in the preceding chapter, the apostle had

been treating of the universality of God's grace. And in the first verse of this chapter, he anticipates an objection which is frequently made to this doctrine, viz. that it leads to licentiousness. To meet this objection, the apostle endeavors to show the absurdity of the principle, that those who had embraced Christ and become *dead to sin*, should continue to violate the laws of God. "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" This subject the apostle keeps in view, to the sixth verse, where he informs us, as we have already seen, that the *old man was crucified*, not that we might live in sin, but that the *body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin*. This he confirms by the words in debate, "He that is dead, is freed from sin;" that is, he that has become dead to sin, by having the old man crucified, instead of continuing in sin, as the objection suggests, is freed from sin. This is clearly the apostle's argument, and taken in this light, we see its force and pertinency. But if the death here spoken of, be the death of the body, the force of the argument is lost entirely. The objection states that God's boundless grace leads to sin. And the apostle, according to your views, answers this objection by saying, in sentiment, that if a person dies in the very act of murder, he will go to happiness as quick as the greatest saint. This instead of meeting the objection, would rather encourage it. But God forbid that we should ascribe such futile reasoning to an inspired apostle.

Further; we have already seen that the sentiment of the 7th verse is explained by the 6th. What the apostle means by the term *dead*, in the 7th verse, is explained in the 6th, to signify *crucifying the old man*; and what is meant in the 7th by the phrase, *freed from sin*, is explained in the 6th to signify, *that we should not serve sin*. And in the 4th it is explained to mean that *we should walk in newness of life*. But the apostle not only

guarded the expression, "he that is dead is freed from sin," in the verses which preceded it, but in the following verses he does the same. His words are—"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be *dead indeed unto sin*, but *alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*." Here again, the apostle expresses the same idea as in the 7th verse. He explains the word *dead*, to signify *dead unto sin*; and the phrase *freed from sin*, to signify being *alive unto God through Jesus Christ*. He then adds, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Here again we see the nature of this death. Those who were dead in the sense of the 7th verse, were still in their *mortal bodies*. Let us now inquire, are we authorized to understand the term *dead*, in verse 7th, to signify the extinction of animal life, when it is not used in that sense in the context, so much as once, when applied to men? Shall we deviate from the apostle's repeated definition, only to support a preconceived opinion? Is this receiving with meekness the word of divine truth?

But probably you will say that the term, *death*, is used frequently in the connexion to signify the *death of the body*. We readily admit that it is used in that sense, when applied to Jesus Christ. But what of that? Does it follow that it must have the same meaning, when applied to men, when the apostle has told us repeatedly that it has not? Now for the sake of the case, we will admit that your reasoning is correct. Your argument is, that the death mentioned in the 7th verse, must signify the death of the body, because it has this meaning in the context. But to whom is it applied in the context, when it means temporal death? Only to Jesus Christ. So then verse 7th, "He that is dead, is freed from sin," applies to Jesus Christ. And the argument in support of your system, would be this;—Because Jesus Christ, who never committed any sin, was by death freed from sin;

therefore those who die in sin, will pass immediately to happiness. This reasoning, to say the least, is not very conclusive.

The view we have given of Rom. vi. 7, receives the fullest confirmation, when we attend to what the same apostle has said upon the same subject elsewhere. To the Galatians he says, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."\* Here as in Rom. vi. the apostle speaks of a *death to sin*. *I am crucified*, says he. This he illustrates, as in Romans, by the *literal death of Christ*. *I am crucified with Christ*; nevertheless I live by faith in the Son of God. This passage conveys the same idea as that in Romans. There he says, "He that is dead, is freed from sin;" and here he says, "I am crucified, nevertheless I live by faith in the Son of God." Now it is clear that St. Paul means the same by being *crucified*, in this passage, that he does by being *dead*, in the other; and what he calls being *freed from sin*, in the one, he calls *living by faith*, in the other. And in both passages alike, he illustrates this by the *literal death of Christ*. But did Paul mean that he was *temporally* dead, in this passage to the Galatians? No one will assert this. Again, the same apostle says, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."† In this passage Paul says that he is *crucified to the world*. By this he means the same as by being *dead*, in Romans; and the idea conveyed in one passage, by the phrase, *freed from sin*, he conveys in the other, by the phrase, *the world is crucified to me*, that is, worldly lusts cease to influence my conduct. In another passage, the apostle Paul alludes to the same subject, and illustrates our

\* Gal. ii. 20.

† Gal. vi. 14.

spiritual resurrection by the literal resurrection of Christ, and represents those who are *dead to sin*, as being delivered from its baneful influence. His words are these—"If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."\* This passage teaches us that the Colossians were dead with Christ, and risen with him. Now in all these passages, St. Paul speaks of the same thing as in Rom. vi. 7. He speaks of a *death to sin*, and represents that those who are dead in this sense, were freed from the ruling power of sin. And in every instance he illustrates this by the literal death and resurrection of Christ. Every person whose mind is free from the bias of system, would acknowledge these passages parallel to the one in Romans. But will you pretend that the death spoken of in these passages, is the death of the body? Will you admit that Paul was literally dead, when he wrote his epistles, and that those to whom he addressed them, had departed this life?

Having noticed several passages in the epistles of Paul, let us now inquire what the other writers say upon this subject. St. Peter has a passage parallel to Rom. vi. 7. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, for *he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin*, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."† This passage renders the one in Romans perfectly intelligible. Paul says, "He that is dead, is freed from sin." Peter says, "He that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin." Peter uses the phrase, *suffered in the flesh*, to mean the same as *died*. It is the same expression which he uses in the same passage, to express the *death* of Christ. All must acknowledge that St.

\* Col. iii. 1, 3.

† 1 Peter, iv. 1, 2.

Peter means the same by *suffering in the flesh*, that St. Paul does by being *dead*; and the former means the same by *ceasing from sin*, that the latter does by being *freed from sin*. Here I think every unprejudiced person must admit that both apostles were treating upon the same subject, and laboring to establish the same point. Both of them speak of the literal death of Christ, and infer the point in debate therefrom. Now if we can ascertain what St. Peter meant by *suffering in the flesh*, and *ceasing from sin*, we shall then have ascertained what St. Paul meant by being *dead*, and *freed from sin*. But what was Peter's meaning? It is absolutely certain that Peter by *suffering in the flesh*, did not mean temporal death; for after declaring that he who had thus suffered, or was thus dead, had ceased from sin, he tells us the effect, or influence of being thus dead—"that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the *FLESH*, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." Those who had suffered in the flesh, and ceased from sin, in St. Peter's sense of these expressions, had not experienced temporal death; for it would be a flat contradiction to say that they had died a temporal death, that they should *live the rest of their time in the flesh*, according to the will of God.

Now from the clause, "that he should live the rest of his time in the *flesh*," it is as clear as any thing can be, that he was then in the flesh, and consequently the death cannot be temporal death. The death alluded to is a *death to sin*. This is corroborated by what Peter says in another passage in the same epistle. Speaking of Christ he says, "Who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being *dead to sins*, should live unto righteousness."\* This passage expresses the same idea as the former, and removes every doubt from the apostle's meaning, if any doubt could exist before.

\* 1 Peter, ii. 24.

He explains the death spoken of in the passage to mean a *death to sin*, and what he expressed in the other passage by the phrase, *ceased from sin*, he here explains to mean to *live unto righteousness*. It is incontrovertibly evident that St. Peter and St. Paul were treating upon one and the same subject ; and as St. Peter's language cannot possibly be interpreted of a temporal death, it follows with moral certainty that the language of St. Paul, "He that is dead is freed from sin," cannot be interpreted of the death of the body. After what has been offered upon the subject, I flatter myself that it will appear obvious to the reader that the passage, "He that is dead, is freed from sin," will not bear the exposition you have given it. We have seen that the whole scope of the apostle's argument, and the context forbid it ; that all the passages in which Paul treats upon the same subject forbid it ; and that St. Peter in a parallel passage expressly cuts it off.

Before we dismiss this subject, we will notice an objection which may probably be urged against the view I have given of the passage. The objection is this ;—the death spoken of can mean nothing short of temporal death, for no person is *completely freed from sin in this world*. This objection, however plausible it may appear, is founded upon a mistaken idea of scripture phraseology. When the scriptures treat upon any subject, they do it in popular language. When they speak of the *righteous* and the *wicked*, for instance, these terms are not used with strict philosophical exactness, but only in a relative sense. By a *righteous man*, the sacred writers do not mean a man who is absolutely perfect, or virtuous in the strictest sense of the term ; but only that he is comparatively so, more virtuous than men in general. And so on the other hand, of the *wicked*. In the scripture sense of the terms, a righteous man is not free from all sin, neither is a sinner devoid of all goodness. Noah

is called *just*, Lot *just* and *righteous*, Job a *perfect* and an *upright* man, and Nathaniel an Israelite in whom was *no guile*. Now these terms and phrases are as expressive of *immaculate purity*, as the phrase *freed from sin*; and as you will acknowledge that the former apply to men in this world, there can be no impropriety in the latter's applying to this world also. We do not suppose that the apostle meant to teach that his brethren were absolutely perfect, or free from all impurity. No, his only meaning was, that they were comparatively righteous. In a word, that they were freed from sin, in the same degree they were dead to it, that is, in a relative sense.

The passage in Romans is to be understood in the same sense as many other passages. St. John says, "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin."\* Now we cannot understand this passage strictly, without involving many absurdities. John himself confesses that he was not without sin, and still he believed that he had passed from death unto life. But I need not labor a point which must be obvious to every reader of the scripture. If we turn to the 6th chapter of Romans, where the passage in debate is found, we shall see that Paul did apply the phrase *free from sin*, to men in this world. Verse 14th—"For sin shall not have dominion over you." This amounts to as much as being freed from sin; for they were freed from sin, if sin had no dominion over them. Verse 18—"Being then made *free from sin*, ye became the servants of righteousness." In this passage it is expressly asserted that those to whom the apostle addressed himself were *free from sin*. Verse 22—"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Here then it is expressly said in two verses at least, that the brethren of the Roman church were

\* 1 John iii. 9.



*free from sin.* This not only removes the objection, but furnishes an additional argument in favor of my construction of verse 7th. We find by these quotations, that what is said in the last clause of the 7th verse, applies to men in this world, and this is a weighty argument in favor of the whole verse having such an application. At all events it destroys your argument. For it is clearly proved that the phrase, *free from sin*, in the 6th of Romans, does in two instances apply to men in this world, where you will admit that its meaning is only comparative; and if the expression, *freed from sin*, has only a comparative signification, even if you apply it to a future world, it will not exclude *all iniquity*. From what has been offered upon the subject, I think it will appear that the passage in question does not favor your system in the least; and that the passage simply means, "He that is dead to sin, is freed from its consequences."

I have now noticed the principal arguments which are alledged in support of your views, and how far I have removed their force, is submitted to the reader. Thus far I have confined myself to your system, and the arguments by which you support it. I have endeavored to show that your system is defective, and your arguments inconclusive; and if in any instance I have used expressions which are thought to border upon disrespect, I will offer this explanation; my remarks have been directed to the system, and not to its author; and while I express my disapprobation of the one, I do not intend any disrespect to the other. If what I have offered in opposition to your views, be valid, then the doctrine of the happiness of all men at the article of death, must be given up. For while I consider your system weak, I firmly believe at the same time, that you have defended it in the best possible manner. The defect lies not in the advocate, but in the system he has the misfortune to defend. Your defence being the best possible, if your arguments

can be fairly answered, the system must inevitably fall. And if your system, which limits all punishment to this world, be unfounded, then the doctrine of future punishment will follow of course. In the subsequent Letters, I shall adduce evidence in favor of my own views upon this subject, and endeavor to obviate the objections you have offered against these views. I shall not however, confine myself solely to your objections, but shall occasionally notice arguments which have been offered by other writers on your side of the question, whenever I find any thing advanced by them which is not contained in your arguments.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER IV.

*Statement of the doctrine of Future Punishment.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

Having examined your system, and the principal arguments you alledge in its support, I will now state in a definite manner, the views which I shall attempt to defend. I shall endeavor to show that *those who die impenitent will, after death, enter into a state of misery, consisting of anxiety, guilt, and remorse, which will continue until repentance or reformation is effected.* We do not believe that this misery will arise from any *external application*, but from the *internal state of the mind.* It is not our belief that this punishment will be inflicted by the immediate hand of God, and as it were, out of the common course of his moral dealings, but that it will grow necessarily out of the moral natures God has given us; that it will be the legitimate fruit of that guilt of which the mind will be conscious, in consequence of past transgressions. We know by what we feel in ourselves, and see in others, that one overt act of wickedness leaves the mind in a state of condemnation and misery; and as many commit the most atrocious crimes the instant they leave this world, it is reasonable to suppose that they will enter into a state of remorse and inquietude after death. To me this has all the force of moral demonstration. Sin always leaves the mind in condemnation. This is an established principle; it grows necessarily out of the nature which we possess. Take men as they are, and it is impossible for it to be otherwise. Now a person taken away in the perpetration of a horrid crime, must be unhappy after death. His moral nature renders immediate happiness impossible. Unless his accountability is destroyed, his

consciousness done away, and his moral nature annihilated ; in a word, unless man is changed into some other creature, it appears morally certain that those who depart this world in gross wickedness, will enter into a state of infelicity.

If men exist in a future state, they must retain their *identities* ; that is, they must be conscious that they are the same beings who have existed in this world, and performed such and such actions. Without this consciousness, men cease to exist. If I fall asleep to night, and awake on the morning of to-morrow without my consciousness, that is, without any knowledge or recollection of having existed before, it ceases to be myself, and becomes another being. Nothing which existed in me, and went to make up my personal identity, or individuality, is found in him ; but he is as distinct and as separate from me, as Peter or Paul. The same will hold good in relation to a future state. In that state we must possess a consciousness of having existed here, or it is not we who exist, but it becomes a new creation. All then, that goes to make up an individual, must exist after death, or there is no future life to us. How do men in this world distinguish themselves from one another ? It is solely because they possess an individual identity or consciousness ; that is, they have a conscious knowledge that they have existed before that moment, and are the same beings who have thought, and felt, and acted thus and so. This consciousness is what constitutes an essential ingredient in an individual. Destroy this consciousness, and individuality ceases. Now if we exist in a future state, we must possess this individual consciousness, and all those principles and feelings which constitute personal identity. To talk of men's existing in a future state, without this consciousness, would be the height of extravagance and absurdity ; it would be something similar to the notion that all men sinned in Adam,

a position you would by no means admit. But it is no more absurd to say that men sin, without a consciousness of sinning, than it is to say that they exist, without a consciousness of existing.

It appears clear from the nature of the case, that men in a future state must retain their consciousness, and this idea receives additional support from the scriptures. Jesus Christ, who is our pattern or example, retained his consciousness after death. He knew that he was the same person who had been baptized by John, betrayed by Judas, and crucified by the Jews. He knew that he had existed before; he recognized his disciples, and commanded them to preach that gospel which he had died to establish. Hence it will be seen that Jesus Christ retained his consciousness after death. And this will be the state of all men in a future world. The apostle intimates to us, that in a future state, we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known.\* We are told in passages which you apply to a future state, that the redeemed will ascribe glory and honor to Jesus Christ in consequence of his having suffered and died for men in this world.† These passages contain full proof that men retain their consciousness after death. The redeemed in a future state praise Christ for what he has done for them, and as the blessing was made known to many of them in this world, it is manifest that they had a realizing sense of the blessings they received while here; and hence it is clear that they were conscious after death, of events which occurred here in time.

Thus it appears both from scripture and reason, that men will retain their consciousness after death; they will be the same individuals there they were here, and will have a realizing sense of their conduct in this world. We will admit for the sake of the case, that men

\* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

† Rev. v. 12, 13.

in a future state, though they may be conscious of having existed here, may not have a distinct recollection of all the actions they have performed. But this will not effect the argument. They will remember the last act of their lives here, especially if it be an act of gross wickedness, and this is all the argument requires. Now a man who goes out of the world in the very act of murder, for instance, will in a future state, have a realizing sense of his character and conduct. There will be no necessity of his being informed that he is a murderer, for he will be conscious of this; he will know that the last act of his life in this world, was an act of gross immorality, and this will render him unhappy. It would be impossible for him to enjoy quietude of mind, while he is possessed of his consciousness, and knows that a weight of guilt rests upon his mind. Unless, therefore, at death man is changed into a stock, or stone, or some other creature, it appears perfectly clear that the character before us, cannot enter upon immediate enjoyment. Knowing himself to be a murderer, he must be unhappy. There is no need of any executive authority to inflict a punishment upon him; for his own feelings will constitute his misery, and his sin will be its own avenger. We know by our own experience, that men cannot be instantly happy after committing such horrid crimes. Misery flows necessarily from the state of mind attendant upon transgression. This is true of men in this world, and this misery arises from a consciousness of their past bad conduct; and as men will retain their consciousness in a future state, it follows, that those who die in the very act of transgression, will be unhappy after death.

We do not believe that men will be consigned to any particular place of punishment, *as such*; but that the punishment will arise from their own unholy feelings and disturbed minds. The remorse of conscience will

be the punishment, and hell will be found within them. The future punishment in which we believe, is no different in nature or kind, from what men experience in this world. And any person who is opposed to future punishment on this view of the subject, does, if he would confess it, feel equally opposed to all punishment in this world. It would seem that no reflecting person, who is friendly to virtue and morality, could oppose a future punishment of the nature I have mentioned. It has frequently been said by Christian writers, that if the unbelievers in revelation were men of real integrity, they could not possibly feel opposed to the moral precepts of the gospel. And it appears to me that the same remark will apply to the case before us. If a man is friendly to the cause of virtue and holiness, and is impressed with a just sense of accountability to God, I cannot conceive what motive he can have in opposing a future retribution, properly understood.

Having stated the doctrine of future punishment, and shown that it is included in the idea of future, conscious existence, and is no different in its nature from punishment in this world, I will now call your attention to several considerations which lead the mind irresistibly to the thought of a future retribution.

1. *An equitable retribution does not take place in this world.* If this proposition can be established, a future retribution follows as a necessary consequence; for the Almighty declares that he will render to every man according to his works. There are many passages of scripture which teach us that a just and full retribution does not take place in this state. It was said to the rich man, who was in misery after death, "Remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."\* This text not only teaches

\* Luke xvi. 25.

us that men are not fully rewarded in this world, but that a retribution does take place after death. This passage will be treated of at large in its proper place. We readily admit that sin is punished in this world, but because men are punished here in some degree, it does not follow that they are punished to the full extent of their deserts. What we shall attempt to maintain is that a full and equitable retribution does not take place in this state. David was fully convinced of this. When he saw the prosperity of the wicked, his heart was grieved within him, because he could not reconcile the retribution which took place in this world, with the justice and equity of the divine Being. Speaking of the prosperity of the wicked, he says, "There are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain, violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart can wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. And they say, How doth God know and is there knowledge in the Most High? When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."\*

Now although this description of the wicked will not hold good at all times, and in every situation, yet there are instances in which this is a just representation of the condition of the righteous and wicked. Look for example to the first ages of Christianity. The meek and humble followers of the Lamb, were persecuted beyond measure. They were exposed to every hardship, and called to suffer every agony which human nature could

\* Ps. lxxiii. 4—17.



possibly feel, or the ingenuity of their persecutors could invent. But while these innocent Christians were thus enduring every torture, their cruel persecutors and murderers were enjoying peace and quietude, and reveling in sensual indulgences. To an age like this, the description of the Psalmist will apply. At such periods it is obvious to the eye of unbiassed reason, that an equal retribution does not take place in this world. St. Paul knew by sad experience that the gospel subjected him and his brethren to greater trials and difficulties, than those to which the enemies of Christianity were exposed. Reflecting upon this subject he says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable."\* Now this passage rests upon the principle, that the gospel in that age subjected its possessors to greater sufferings than other men were called to experience.

The apostle, it is true, was speaking not of a future punishment, but of a future existence. But in either case, the argument is precisely the same. The apostle's argument is this;—If there is no future existence, then all men at death are in one and the same situation; they are precisely alike relative to happiness or misery; and *we are of all men the most miserable*, because we are called to encounter greater sufferings in this world than those who reject the gospel. And the same may be said if there be no future retribution. For if all men are happy after death, they are all in the same situation; they are all alike as much as though they were all annihilated. Hence the apostle might say, If there be no future punishment, we are of all men the most miserable. The apostle's declaration, "we are of all men the most miserable," is founded upon the principle, that his troubles in this world were greater than other men's. And whether he was treating upon future punishment or

\* 1 Cor. xv. 19.

future existence, this principle remains the same. But probably it may be said that the apostle had greater consolations than other men, as well as greater trials. To this we reply, however great the apostle's consolations might have been, his sufferings were so weighty as to leave the balance of misery over happiness, greater in him than in the enemies of the gospel. If the apostle's consolations or enjoyment kept pace with his sufferings, so as to leave him on the whole as happy as other men, he could not say with a shadow of propriety, or even truth, that he was the most miserable of all men, if the dead rise not. For if men do not exist after death, he could not be more miserable than other men, unless he had a greater balance of misery over happiness in this world, than other men. So the apostle's declaration goes directly to show that he and his Christian brethren had more troubles in this world, than the persecutors of the gospel. This passage then proves incontrovertibly that a just retribution does not take place in this world, and so confirms the account given by the Psalmist, that the wicked are sometimes prosperous in this world, even beyond the righteous.

Here then we have the testimony of David and Paul, that men are not fully recompensed in this state. But you will probably say that the Psalmist gave this representation, when he was ignorant, before he went into the sanctuary, and learned the truth. 'Tis true, that David's perplexity arose from his ignorance. He could not reconcile the enjoyment and prosperity of the wicked in this world, with the justice and equity of the Deity. But after he obtained information on the subject, these perplexities were all dispelled. David, when he was perplexed, was ignorant, it is true. But of what was he ignorant? Not of the prosperity of the wicked; for that he had already seen. Not of their quiet and enjoyment; for that he had witnessed. But he was

ignorant of their *end*. "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me ; until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their *end*." Here then was the additional knowledge which David received. He was not informed that his representation was false, or even exaggerated ; but rather it was confirmed. But the knowledge which he acquired related to their *end*, that is, the state which awaited them after death. Your system requires that men be punished by the compunctions of conscience, day by day as they pass along. But it was not this which gave ease to the mind of the Psalmist ; he understood that in the *end* they would be recompensed. To call that punishment which falls upon men day by day their *end*, is destroying the meaning of language, and making the scriptures mean what we please.

The whole book of Job goes to prove that men are not dealt with in this world according to their moral characters. Job, we are told, was a *perfect and upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil ; in a word, that there was none like him in the earth.\** Job then was a *virtuous man ;* he was *unparalleled* in goodness. But was his happiness on earth as much greater than other men's, as his character stood fairer ? No one will pretend this. No man ever experienced more severe trials. His fortune, his children, and all that he had, were torn from him. His friends proved false ; his bodily and mental agonies were almost insupportable. The many trying and severe afflictions which befel the perfect and patient Job, teach us in the plainest manner that men are not always dealt with in this world according to their moral characters. While the righteous are groaning under many afflictions, the wicked are frequently prosperous and happy. Not only the case of Job, but the conversation between him and his friends, incontestably shows that God does not always deal with

\* Job, i. 8.

men in this world according to their moral characters. The contest between Job and his friends was simply this;—Job maintained that God did not always deal with men here according to their deserts, but his friends maintained that he did; and because Job was afflicted more than other men, they inferred that he was more criminal. No person can read the book of Job understandingly, without perceiving that this was the dispute between them.

His friends, to establish their side of the question, say, "Who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same." "The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor. A dreadful sound is in his ears; in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him. He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword." "The light of the wicked shall be put out, the snare is laid for him in the ground, and the trap for him in the way. Terror shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet. Destruction shall be ready at his side, his confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors. He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world. Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God."<sup>\*</sup> From these and various other passages, we learn the doctrine for which Job's friends contended. They maintained that God in this world always dealt with men according to their moral characters; or, in other words, that a just retribution always took place in this state of existence.

But Job, on the other hand, contended that the wicked frequently prospered in this world; even beyond the

<sup>\*</sup> Job iv. 7, 8. xv. 20, 21, 22. xviii. 5—21.

righteous. In support of this, among other things, he says, "The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God, are secure; into whose hands God bringeth abundantly." "God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder, he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark. His archers compass me round about; he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground. He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant. My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death. Not for any injustice in my hands; also my prayer is pure." "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."\*

By the above passages we learn that Job was far from admitting a just and full retribution in this world. He says, that robbers prosper, while he, though innocent, is greatly afflicted by God. He tells us that the wicked prosper, not only in temporal things, but also in their own feelings; in their minds they have peace. They are safe from fear, and the rod of the Almighty is not upon them. Thus, Sir, it appears that Job's friends believed with you, that God always dealt with men in this world according to their moral characters; that a full and

\* Job xii. 6. xvi. 11—17. xxi. 7—12.

equitable retribution invariably takes place here. But Job maintained that this was not the case.

Here then we have the case plainly before us. Job asserts that God does not deal with men in this state of being strictly according to their deserts; but his friends assert the opposite. Now the only question to be decided is this;—*whether Job was correct, or his friends.* This question is happily decided by the Judge of all the earth. “And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends; *for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.* Therefore take unto you seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept: *lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.*”\* Thus does the divine Being expressly approve of the sentiment advanced by Job, and condemn that advanced by his friends. He says that Job had spoken right, but his friends had not. We have already seen that Job maintained that a full and complete retribution did not take place in the present world, and this sentiment is approved by God himself. But Eliphaz and his associates, by maintaining the opposite, excited the wrath of the Lord, and were formally condemned by him. This then is full proof that men are not equitably recompensed on this side the grave. And hence the necessity of a future retribution.

But you will probably say that we cannot tell how much distress of mind the sinner feels in the midst of temporal prosperity. How then can you determine that he receives the full reward of his iniquity here in time? If we are ignorant of the sinner’s feelings, then surely

\* Job xlii. 7, 8.

you cannot say that he is punished to the full extent of his deserts. So this veil of ignorance which you would cast over the subject, is an acknowledgment that your views cannot be established. But is it certain that the virtuous, when undergoing the severest temporal and corporeal afflictions, always enjoy mental peace and quietness? Our Savior, when clothed in our nature, though he was pure and spotless, experienced no small share of grief. He says, "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.*" To say that all good men enjoy perfect tranquillity under the greatest earthly afflictions, is to contradict our own experience, and the common sentiment of mankind. Does it appear from the history, that Job enjoyed mental happiness in the midst of his troubles? The farthest from it possible. The whole of Job's conversation goes to show that his mind was pained as well as his body. Neither is it true that the wicked are sorely smitten with remorse in the midst of their temporal prosperity. Job, as we have already seen, says, "they are safe from fear, neither is the rod of the Almighty upon them." Thus it appears that they are frequently destitute of that fear and anxiety which many good men are called to experience. David also says, that *they are not troubled like other men*. The apostle Paul confesses himself the *most miserable of all men*, in consequence of the troubles which the gospel drew upon him in this world. From these scriptures it is manifest that cases sometimes occur in which the wicked are not only more prosperous, but in fact are more happy, than the righteous. We do not pretend that this is always the case. Facts will not permit, neither does my theory require, me to say that as a general thing, virtue has less enjoyment than vice. But the same facts and scripture testimony constrain me to say that the wicked are sometimes prospered even beyond the righteous in this state.

But on your system, you must maintain the reverse. Your views require that you maintain that our misery always increases with our guilt. It is a necessary part of your system that men are sufficiently punished by their own feelings, and that conscience is the judge which will render to all men their just due. Your whole system then rests upon the presumption that the conscience is always pure, and invariably metes out our punishment strictly to our demerits. But this position is repugnant to both scripture and reason. Experience plainly teaches us that the compunctions of conscience are far from being in proportion to the enormity of our guilt. This remorse does not keep pace with our wickedness. The novice in crime will feel more remorse for stealing sixpence, than the adept in wickedness does for a robbery or a murder. We know by our own experience, that conscience becomes more pliable, the oftener she is made to bow to our evil inclinations. When we first commence a sinful course, conscience remonstrates with becoming firmness; but if we continue to walk in that path, we shall find that conscience will lose its sting in nearly the same proportion that we progress in wickedness. It is the nature of sin to blunt the moral feelings, and lay the conscience asleep. The person who drinks too deep at the intoxicating bowl for the first time, experiences shame and remorse, while the habitual drunkard has lost all sense of shame, and has no other regret than that he does not possess the means of plunging deeper into that destructive vice. And so of all other vices. The fashionable murderer, the duellist, who takes the field, and with deliberate aim kills his rival, is filled with rejoicing, rather than remorse. He will ever boast of his bloody exploits, and will take the field again, whenever an opportunity presents itself. But while this aspiring murderer is arrogating to himself the greatest honors, and has the satisfaction of being feasted



and applauded by a corrupt multitude, the tyro in crime experiences the severest remorse of conscience, and is perhaps pining in prison. Instead of the reprovings of conscience being more and more severe, as we progress in wickedness, the very reverse of this is the truth. The more virtuous a man is, the more he is alive to a sense of accountability to God, and as he increases in sin, his sense of accountability decreases. The greater the sinner therefore, the less are the reprovings of conscience. Every person who has given any attention to the subject, must be sensible that the feelings of conscience are more acute in a virtuous, than in a vicious man.

Now what is so clearly taught by observation and experience, is further corroborated by the scriptures. St. Paul says, "The blood of Christ shall *purge your consciences from dead works.*"\* This *purging of the conscience from dead works*, necessarily supposes that it had once been defiled by acts of wickedness. Again he says, "The worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sin."† This passage plainly implies that before the worshipper was purged, his conscience was sinful. The conscience frequently becomes corrupt and sinful. Hence the apostle says, "having our hearts sprinkled from an *evil conscience.*"‡ The apostle to Titus teaches the same truth—"Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but even their mind and *conscience is defiled.*"§ Thus it appears that sin corrupts the *whole man*; even his mind and his conscience partake of this defilement. Once more, the apostle speaks of apostates who speak lies in hypocrisy, "having their *conscience seared with a hot iron.*"|| Now will any person pretend that a conscience thus callous,

\* Heb. ix. 14.

† Heb x. 2.

‡ Heb. x. 22.

† Tit. i. 15

|| 1 Tim. iv. 2.

and stupified, is a suitable tribunal to determine the characters of men? We are told that the Judge of all the earth will do right. But can the same be said of a conscience which is *sinful, evil, defiled*, seared as with a hot iron? Since conscience frequently becomes corrupt, and hardened, it follows of course that this is not to be the final judge of the characters of men. "For who could expect a correct decision, in all cases, from a corrupt judge? and shall we look to a defiled conscience as the last and only tribunal, by which the actions of men are to be tried?"\*

Men are naturally selfish beings; and sin always corrupts the heart, and blunts the moral feelings to that degree that the old veteran in wickedness will feel but little remorse for the most atrocious deeds. The nature of sin is so alluring, that the old offender will almost persuade himself that his behavior is not reprehensible. Now can we reasonably suppose that a conscience thus seared and defiled will do perfect justice in all cases? It is the common consent of mankind that it would not. Would it be wise in all cases of a civil nature to place the defendant upon the bench, and let him decide his own case? Are robbers and murderers generally allowed the privilege of deciding whether they shall be executed or not? Much otherwise. And the reason is obvious. It is the common sentiment of mankind that the sinner would always favor himself at the expense of justice and equity, should he be permitted to decide his own cause. And so with a defiled conscience; its decision would partake of that selfishness which is characteristic of the sinner. The remorse we feel, arises from a just sense of our accountability to God. But the adept in wickedness has little or no sense of his accountability, and endea-

\* See Dissertations on future punishment by Rev. S. C. Loveland, published in the Christian Repository, Vol. IV. where will be found many excellent remarks upon this subject.

vors habitually to banish God from his thoughts. In the description of the wicked given by the Psalmist, which we have already noticed, does it appear that they had a realizing sense of their accountability to God? The farthest from it possible. The passage informs us that they set their mouth against the heavens, and say, *How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?* Here instead of admitting their accountability to God, they seem to doubt his taking cognizance of their conduct. Job also, as we have seen, represents the wicked as prosperous, and in consequence of this, they become haughty, and say unto God, *depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* Thus instead of feeling their accountability, they harden their hearts, and command God to depart from them. St. Paul after the Psalmist, says of certain vile characters, *there is no fear of God before their eyes.\**

Now it would be the summit of weakness to say that these characters had a realizing sense of their accountability to God, when they had no fear of him before their eyes. Who will have the presumption to say that sinners feel a just sense of their accountability to their Maker, while they have *no fear of him, do not desire his instruction, but command him to depart from them?* Since remorse of conscience arises principally from a sense of our accountability to God, and the most corrupt sinners have the least sense of their accountability, it appears morally certain that conscience does not render to every man according to his deeds. Who can believe that the selfish, mercenary being, who will destroy his neighbor's life to increase his temporal interest, will by the bar of his own conscience condemn himself to a just and equitable punishment?—But we will drop all reasoning of this sort upon the subject, for the sacred writers have decided it forever. They assure us that the

\* Rom. iii. 18.

conscience becomes defiled and seared, so that the most abandoned sinners, instead of feeling accountable to the divine Being, renounce his control, despise his instruction, and command him to depart from them.

If we look at the conduct of men, we shall see that the sting of conscience does not restrain them from sin. Old transgressors continue to commit sin, notwithstanding all the horrors of conscience. When tempted at any time to commit sin, they do not inquire whether they shall experience remorse of conscience; for they know that this, to a certain degree, always attends transgression. But this they are willing to bear. Should you tell an old offender, that if he continued in sin, he would experience almost intolerable remorse in every act of transgression, he would probably inform you that he was as well acquainted with his own feelings as yourself, and that if he could escape human laws, it was all he expected or desired. The principal inquiry which an old sinner makes is, not whether he shall escape remorse of conscience, but whether he shall escape human authority. We find that men are in *love* with sin, much in proportion as they practise it. There is something in sin which strikes the virtuous mind with dread, but the sinner rolls it as a sweet morsel under his tongue. Hence we read, "*Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light.*" Will you inform the sinner, that, if he violates the laws of God, he will experience darkness? This is just what he desires; he *loves darkness rather than light*. And will you call that a just punishment for sin, which the sinner mostly desires? "Are we to look to the very darkness which men love, as containing a full and equal punishment for their transgressions? Is this the whole chastening of the Lord, which is to humble and subdue the hardened sinner? We find that men are generally in *love* with ini-

quity, much in proportion to their practice of iniquity. And although we grant that the love of iniquity is founded on deceptive principles, and the promised happy consequences are all a cheat to the soul; yet they are such as flatter the sinner, and are, by no means, calculated to dissuade him from pursuing his accustomed course. Would a person be apt to account that which he loves, as a punishment? No; nor would it, properly speaking, have the effect of a punishment upon his mind, till he is enabled to realize its chastening power. The argument, then, that sin does not, in many instances, carry with itself the reward of its full demerit, appears fully supported from the nature of the case.\*

Again: the idea that the conscience punishes all men to the full extent of their criminality, is of the most fatal moral tendency. It at once aims a blow at the foundation of civilization and order, and tends to introduce anarchy and confusion. If the conscience of every man punishes him to the full extent of his demerit, then human punishments are unjust and cruel. Human laws frequently sentence men to imprisonment for life; they go further, they sometimes put men to death in the most lingering manner. Now if conscience punishes each individual to the full extent of his deserts, any other punishment is unjust. It is inflicting a punishment upon those who had been, or would be sufficiently punished without the interference of human authority. On this ground then, human laws are only engines of cruelty, and ought to be repealed. And if all laws are repealed, then all government, all order, all civilization must fall. Now, Sir, if you maintain that conscience is a judge which will in this world render to every man according to his deeds, you are in duty bound to oppose the execution, and even existence of human laws. But do you desire to subvert all human authority, and intro-

\* Christian Repository, vol. IV. p. 66.

duce a state of anarchy? I am sensible that you would shudder at such an idea. Then reject the unscriptural notion that conscience is the only tribunal at which men will be tried—a notion devoid of all authority, and one which aims a death blow at all order and regularity. Thus it hath been shown that conscience is far from being a just and equitable judge, and consequently it cannot be pretended that men receive their due reward as they pass the journey of life.

We frequently see instances in which it is obvious to the eye of unbiassed reason, that a just retribution does not take place in this world. To illustrate this, we will suppose a case. We will suppose then, that two men, A and B, start in company, to commit robbery and murder, and while in the very act of taking the life of the innocent traveller, A receives a shot through the heart, of which he dies instantly; but B escapes alive with the booty. And to avoid detection B flees, and after wandering several months in a distant part of the country, is detected, brought before a magistrate, and committed to prison, where he remains for several months more. He is then brought to trial, receives the sentence of death, is remanded back to prison, where he remains for months loaded with chains, and at last suffers an ignominious death upon the gallows. From the time of the murder until the execution we will say was one year. Now this is no visionary representation. Cases of this nature frequently happen.

Now I would ask, if A went in a moment to perfect bliss, is it not evident that A was punished too little, or B too much? I will observe here that their characters must have stood upon a perfect level, when they assaulted the innocent traveller. It matters not what their conduct might have been before they commenced this daring enterprise. For if men receive all they deserve in this world, they must be punished step by step as

they pass along, so that if they are taken away at any moment, they will have received all their punishment, and so be obnoxious to none after death. If one therefore had been ten times as vicious as the other, he had received ten times as much punishment; consequently they must both have stood on equal grounds at that time; they must both have received up to that time all that was due, no more nor no less. They must therefore have cancelled all their debts up to the time of the affair. A and B were alike guilty in this affair, and for this alone were they guilty. Now I will renew the question whether these men were punished alike for the crime of murder. B continued in this world one whole year before his execution; during the whole of which time he was extremely unhappy. His whole year's severe suffering was closed by the agonies of death. But A who was equally guilty, went, according to your views, instantly to glory. In what sense could A be punished for that crime? Will you say that he was punished by being killed on the spot? The innocent traveller then, was punished as severely as the cruel murderer, for he also was killed upon the spot. And B also, A's accomplice in wickedness, after suffering a whole year, suffered death.

Neither is temporal death a punishment for sin. If A had been as virtuous as St. John, or Jesus himself, he would have suffered temporal death; and perhaps in a manner ten times as painful as to be shot through the heart. So that by being killed instantly, he in fact escaped those long and severe pangs which are the common lot of those who die a natural death. This sudden death therefore, ought to be considered a reward rather than a punishment. He went out of the world more easy than he probably would have done, had he been innocent. You cannot maintain that A was duly punished by losing his life; for you do not consider temporal death as a

punishment for sin. Your words are—"Moral death is the effect of sin, *natural death* is the effect of a *moral constitution*."\* Again; "Men die natural deaths, cause they are naturally mortal; but they are not naturally mortal, because of sin. My opponent will say that the death of the body is in consequence of sin, when one man murders another; to which I reply, if man could not murder another, if men were not mortal, I will acknowledge that sin is after the means where natural life is ended, and my opponent must acknowledge, that it is often the means of persons' being introduced into natural life. Perhaps an hundred are introduced into existence by illicit connexions, where one is taken out by malice prepense."† Here we have your testimony that temporal death is no punishment for sin. You cannot maintain therefore, that A was sufficiently punished by being killed.

But perhaps you will say, if death, self-considered, was no punishment, it was a punishment to him taken from this world; from his business, friends, relatives. But if A goes in an instant to the enjoyment of perfect bliss, it ought to be regarded as a reward, not a punishment. By committing this crime, he was not only taken out of the world easier than he would probably otherwise have been, but he was introduced into heaven sooner than though he had been innocent. The loss of life in this world, therefore, instead of being punishment, was the greatest blessing. By this untimely death he was inducted instantly into all the enjoyment of a glorified state. But while A, on your system, was feasting upon immortal joys, in the presence of God, his accomplice in wickedness, was for a whole year, wandering a vagabond, or pining in a dungeon. Now, with your system out of view, can you say that you think these two men were punished to the same ex-

\* Aton. p. 59.

† Lect. p. 93.



in this world? Were you to sit as a juror, and decide on a question of this nature, I am confident that your verdict would be, that *their punishment here was unequal; that B was punished too much, or A too little.*

But perhaps you may say that it is impossible for us to tell what the feelings of either of these men were, and consequently we cannot determine which was punished the most. Now this is virtually renouncing your system. You contend that all punishment is confined to this world, or in other words, that all are equitably rewarded here. We have introduced a case in which it appears very evident, that a full and equitable punishment does not take place in this world. In order to support your views, it is necessary that you should be able to prove, that these two individuals are punished in this state according to their ill deserts. But when you say it is impossible to tell what their feelings are, you in reality say, that it is impossible to prove your system true. Besides, such suggestions generally have an improper influence, as they tend to bewilder, rather than enlighten the human mind. We are not willing to grant that we are totally ignorant upon subjects of this nature. There are certain principles or propriétés pertaining to the human mind, which are possessed in common by us all; and by knowing what is true of ourselves, we know what is true of others in the same circumstances. We know by experience that all mental agony arises from reflection, and the consideration of our state or condition. We know also that all ideas take place in succession, and consequently that a period of time is necessary in order to our experiencing either happiness or misery. Knowing that this is true of ourselves, we can conclude with a great degree of certainty, that this is true in relation to others. We know that the human mind is so constituted, as to be incapable of admitting

or enduring a vast degree of suffering in an instant time.

Now on the supposition before us, A was killed in instant. We know then with a good degree of certainty that his sufferings could not have been great. To deny this, is to reject all moral evidence, and give up the only proof we can have of the existence of a God. And on the other hand, we can be well persuaded that B's punishment was severe. No person will pretend that this situation was very enviable. Chains, imprisonment, and an ignominious death, are not what people generally covet. B's sufferings during this whole year, instead of being less, were in all probability greater than we are apt to imagine. But while B was enduring the greatest pain, A was partaking of boundless felicity. Now heaven is better than a dungeon, and the throne of the Lamb than a gibbet, then it is certain that B was punished more than A; or rather, that one was punished severely, the other not at all. Hence arises the necessity of future retribution.

Besides, A was taken away in sin, and could not be happy without repentance. The scriptures assure us that faith and repentance are necessary qualifications for the enjoyment of heaven. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Repentance then, is necessary for salvation; but repentance is a *progressive work*. It requires mental exercise. A very person who has any knowledge of the philosophy of the human mind, must know that all ideas take place in succession. A period of time is requisite for every idea, thought, or resolution. No volition can exist in the mind, until the various objects presenting themselves are taken into consideration, and duly weighed. A period of time therefore, is necessary for every rational volition. Repentance is a complicated work, and

course must require a considerable length of time. That resolution which is formed hastily, and without due consideration, is frequently repented of. That repentance which is sudden, hardly deserves the name. For however just it may be in itself, if the resolution was taken without due consideration, as it regards the individual, it was an inconsiderate rather than a virtuous act. Repentance, to be genuine, must be rational; and to be rational, it must be the result of consideration and reflection, which must necessarily occupy the mind for a considerable time. Thus it is obvious from the nature of the human mind, that repentance must be a gradual work. And the scriptures confirm this opinion. The apostle says to his brethren at Corinth, "I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, *though it were but for a season*. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed unto repentance." Here we learn that repentance consists in *sorrowing for a season*. Repentance is always attended with sorrowing, though sorrowing does not always effect repentance. "For," continues the apostle, "godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death."\* By this passage we are taught that that repentance which is genuine in its nature, is always attended with sorrow or pain; and that this sorrow always lasts for a *season*, or *period of time*. Repentance, therefore, is a gradual, progressive work. Now let us apply this principle to the case before us. A was taken from time in an instant, in the very act of murder. He cannot be happy without repentance, and repentance is a painful process, which requires a period of time. For a season therefore, he must be unhappy.

Faith, which is another prerequisite for the enjoyment of heaven, is a mental work. Faith is a firm assent of the mind to the truth of a proposition. And faith, to

\* 2 Cor. vii. 8, 9, 10.

be valuable, must be founded upon good evidence. It would be rashness in any person to give credence to a proposition, until he had, to the best of his understanding, examined the evidence on both sides of the question. Now this is a work of no small magnitude; and the more important the question, the greater care is ought to be bestowed in adjusting and weighing the evidence. To pretend that faith is only a momentary work, is to contradict good sense, and the daily experience of mankind. "Faith," says the apostle, "cometh by *hearing* that is, faith is produced by the weight of evidence.

be well grounded, it must rest upon substantial evidence. Faith in God must arise from the evidence he has given us in the volumes of nature and revelation. And who will have the vanity to declare that by a single glance of the mind, a man may see and examine all the evidence contained in nature and revelation? It is impossible for a man, with the ordinary faculties of nature, to acquire a genuine and well-grounded faith in a moment. Thus we see that faith and repentance, which are absolutely necessary for salvation, are both of a *gradual, progressive* nature; both require a period of time for their full and perfect exercise.

Now how is A, who was killed in an instant, in consequence of a very heinous act, to be admitted into heaven? He cannot be saved without repentance; and repentance is not only a progressive work, but is always attended with a hearty sorrow for sin. Repentance *self-considered*, is a punishment. It is a *regret* which is always attended with compunctions of conscience. A, therefore, before he can be admitted into heaven, must be exercised by repentance, and the very idea of repentance supposes pain and remorse. For a period at least, he must be unhappy. Again; he cannot be saved without faith; but faith is a work of time. He cannot, therefore, enter immediately into the enjoyment

of perfect bliss. Now on the supposition before us, it is as evident, as almost any truth whatever, which rests upon moral evidence, that these two persons are not rewarded in this state of being according to their deserts.

There are many considerations which go to show that a full retribution does not take place here in time. The very idea of accountability supposes a time of rendering an account; and as men are accountable for the actions performed the last moment of their lives, it is manifest that the time of rendering the account must be after the close of this mortal life. This idea is confirmed by those passages which speak of a *day of judgment*; which will be considered in our next. From what has been offered already, I trust it is apparent, that, as a full retribution does not take place in this world, we may reasonably look for it beyond the grave. Since some men are punished for a long series of years for one crime, and others are taken from this state in an instant, in the very perpetration of a crime equally atrocious, it is clear that they must be punished after death, if they are punished at all. Neither are such persons in a right frame of mind to enjoy happiness. You cannot say with consistency, that they are qualified for heaven instantly at or in death, for,

2. *It is an acknowledged principle with you, that religion is progressive in its nature and operations.* We have just been laboring to show that faith and repentance are of a *gradual* character, or that a period of time is requisite for their proper exercise. But we might have saved ourselves this labor; for it is a principle for which you strongly contend. We have already seen,\* that you maintain that men are saved by knowledge which is *gradually acquired*. No one is more opposed to *instantaneous conversions*, than yourself. You constantly represent the work of the kingdom as a *gradual*;

\* Letter III.

*progressive* work. Now will you assert, in opposition to your own sentiment, that those who die in gross wickedness, will be changed in a moment? If God leads sinners to repentance in this world, only by a *gradual*, *painful* process, can we suppose that the moral principles of the divine government will be so far changed at death, as to introduce a murderer instantly into heaven? Will God alter fundamentally the principles of his government, only to let the most hardened sinners escape the punishment which they so justly deserve? Can we admit such an essential change in the divine Being, when the scriptures assure us, that he is immutable—*without the least variableness, or shadow of turning?* —You admit that all moral changes in this world are of a gradual nature. This principle being laid down, will apply in all cases, unless the contrary be clearly proved. When any general rule is acceded to by both parties, we have a right to apply it in every case, unless the exception can be clearly made out. And the party which shall assert that there is an exception to this rule, is bound by all rules of fair debate to make good his assertion. The labor of proof lies entirely with him who asserts an exception in general rules. This principle, which I think will be admitted by every sound man, will apply to the case now before us. You assert that all moral changes are *gradual*, and to this I accede. Now I have a right to apply this principle in every case; and if you object to its universal application, it is your business to prove that there is an exception to this rule, and not mine to prove that there is not. Now a person is taken from this world in a gross act of iniquity, and as repentance is necessary to his admittance into heaven, and as repentance is a gradual work, it is manifest that such a person cannot be immediately happy. But if you, to avoid this conclusion, assert that he was changed instantly at death, it belongs to you to prove this asser-

tion. But if you decline this, you decline supporting your system by honorable means. I have been thus particular in stating this principle, because I conceive that it has frequently been overlooked. It is useless to argue, unless we have distinct views of the ground on which our arguments rest.

Our knowledge of a future state is derived from the scriptures. But although reason alone could never have taught a future state of being, yet a future state being revealed in the scriptures, reason comes in, and enables us to form consistent notions relative to the nature of that state. Now we have no argument from reason which casts so much light upon a future state, as that drawn from analogy. We know with a good degree of certainty that pious and virtuous affections will produce happiness in a future state, because this is analogous to what we experience in this world. You very frequently advert to analogy to disprove endless misery. You say, it is evident that God will be good to all his creatures in a future state, because he is good to them here.

Now let us introduce analogy in the case before us. You maintain that conversions in this state are of a gradual, progressive nature. This being true in this world, analogy teaches us that the same will hold good in a future state. Analogy in this case has more than ordinary strength; for the principle for which we contend, is analogous, not only in relation to the divine government, but also in relation to the faculties of the human mind, to what is experienced here. Unless the divine Being alters fundamentally the moral principles of his government, and men are converted into infinite beings by changing worlds, it follows that repentance will be a gradual work after death, as much as it is before; and that it will be attended with sorrow or pain there, as well as here. But perhaps you will be ready to say that this analogy will not hold good in all cases; for the scrip-

tures plainly teach some doctrines relative to a future state, which are not analogous to what takes place here. This is readily admitted. But let it be shown that the case before us is of that description. We ask for no solitary text, which plainly says, that God, in a future state, alters the principles of his moral government, as to take a murderer, whose heart is full of malice, and whose hands are reeking with blood, instantly to heaven when similar characters, in this world, would have been punished for months and years. We are disposed to grant that there are some things pertaining to a future state, which are quite different from any thing we see in this world ; but still we insist that the *moral principles* of the divine government are always the same. And if you deviate from these general principles, and alter fundamentally the government of God, you ought to be able to produce a *thus saith the Lord*, to prove your position.

8. *It is an acknowledged principle with us both, that all punishment is salutary.* But, sir, we frequently see men subjected to punishment in consequence of their sins, and this punishment continues to the day of their death, without producing any beneficial effect. Notwithstanding all the punishment which attends them here, they live in sin, increase in wickedness, and die at last in open rebellion. We know that this punishment was not salutary, that it did not reform the sinners in this state ; for they died in the perpetration of some sinful act. Now if this punishment does not extend into a future state, it is evident that it does not reform them. The punishment then, was not salutary, and of course not merciful. Perhaps you will say that these men were reformed by death. But this is only begging the question ; and if we should grant it, you would gain nothing thereby. For we have already seen that you do not admit temporal death to be a punishment for sin.



Now with what propriety can you maintain that all punishment is designed to reform the offender, and that it is certain of its object? In the case before us, we have seen that a person was punished for years, and during that time only grew hardened in sin, and was finally reformed by some other means. He could not, on your system, be reformed by punishment. Suppose a person should be sentenced to the State Prison a certain number of years for the crime of theft; and that immediately after his time had expired, and he was released, he should wilfully commit the crime of murder. Would any person pretend to say that this confinement proved salutary to him? No man of sober sense would advance such an idea. Neither can it be said with any propriety, that the punishment which God inflicts upon men in this world, effects their reformation, when the punished close their lives with deeds of iniquity. Thus, sir, you must give up your favorite theory, relative to immediate happiness, or else confess that punishment is not salutary, but vindictive. And if you admit that punishment is not salutary, you must renounce the doctrine of the "Restitution of all things." But only admit that punishment is extended beyond death, and the whole difficulty is solved. Though punishment is salutary, our daily experience teaches us, that for a season it may be productive of the opposite effect. A little punishment will frequently enrage a person, when a continuation of the same punishment will humble and subdue him. So on our scheme we can with propriety admit, that all the punishment men experience in this world, does in some cases fail of its object; but by continuing this punishment into a future state, till it produces reformation, we can consistently maintain that all punishments are salutary.

From the considerations adduced in this Letter, it appears that punishment must be extended into a future

state. We have shown that an individual consciousness is inseparable from a future state of existence, and that this consciousness must of necessity, make those unhappy after death, who leave this world in the very perpetration of crime. We have further seen that a full and equitable retribution does not take place in this world, and consequently it must in a future ;—that those who are taken away in the commission of crime cannot enter into immediate happiness, for repentance is necessary to salvation, and that is a progressive work, and is always attended with sensations of remorse ;—and that punishment must, in certain cases, be extended into a future state, otherwise we must give up the idea that punishment is salutary. Now these considerations, were there nothing else in the scriptures, would naturally lead our minds to the thought of a future retribution. When the sacred writers had told us that men should be punished according to their deeds, or till they became penitent, they had plainly involved a future discipline. They knew the scenes we had witnessed ; they knew that we had seen many depart this life in gross wickedness, and they inform us that such persons shall be punished, till they reform. There was no great necessity of their saying that such characters would be punished after death ; they knew that this would follow from the nature of the case. They were very careful to lay down the premises, being, as would seem, sensible that we could not mistake the conclusion.

In my next I shall call your attention to more direct proof of a future retribution.

Yours, &c.

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## LETTER V.

*A Future Judgment.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

Having stated several considerations which necessarily imply a future retribution, I will now, as was proposed, call your attention to more direct proof on this subject. The point which now claims our attention, is that of a *future judgment*. But before adducing any scriptures in proof of this, four things will be premised.

1. Though the scriptures teach a future state of existence, yet the passages applying to that subject, or even to a future state in any form, are much fewer in number than most people are apt to imagine. I speak of those passages which apply directly and necessarily to a future state. When I say that the passages of this description are not so numerous as is frequently thought, I advance a sentiment in which you will readily acquiesce. Now as the texts which apply to a future state are not very numerous, it cannot be expected that we shall be able to produce a large catalogue of passages in proof of a future judgment, or even of a future retribution. But a host of texts are not wanted. To use the language of the Bible itself, "by the mouth of *two or three* witnesses, every word shall be established." Now if it can be proved by two or three passages that there will be a future judgment, this will be amply sufficient. And that person who will not yield to such evidence, would not be convinced by a larger number of texts.

2. *A future judgment necessarily supposes a future punishment.* The very idea of a judgment or trial supposes that some may be subjected to suffering. Of this, you and those of your sentiment appear to be sensible ;

for you deny a future, general judgment. But this point is clearly decided by the scriptures. St. Peter says, that God reserves the unjust unto *the day of judgment to be punished*.<sup>\*</sup> This passage plainly asserts that the unjust will be *punished at the day of judgment*. They are reserved to the judgment, for the express purpose of being *punished*. St. Paul speaks of the righteous judgment of God, who will *render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish*, to every man that doeth evil, *in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*. This passage also makes it evident that when the judgment takes place, some will be subjected to suffer. Every passage therefore, which speaks of a future judgment, teaches a future punishment, even though punishment is not expressed in the passage. The idea of punishment is included in that of judgment; and whenever a judgment is mentioned, a punishment is implied. A future judgment, therefore, can be established, a future punishment will follow as a matter of course.

3. Not only every passage which speaks of a judgment in a future state, but every passage which designates any *particular period* of judgment in this state, is an argument in favor of a future retribution. Your system does not admit of any *special* judgment; that is, of judgment which takes place at any *specified* time. According to your views, men are punished at one period as much as at another. There is no period or time, when they are punished by God beyond their deserts. Even at the destruction of Jerusalem, to which period we apply almost every threatening in the New-Testament, men, you contend, received no more than they justly merited; and on your system, this is exactly what they have received in all ages of the world. No one period, therefore, can be called a *day of judgment* any more than

\* 2 Peter ii. 9.

† Rom. ii. 5—16.

another. Now any passage which treats of a *day of judgment*, though it should appear that the passage applies to the present world, is in reality a confutation of your system; as it supposes that the judgment does not take place at all times, at one period as much as at another.

4. In order to understand any writer, it is necessary to take into view the opinions of those to whom he addresses himself. This is a principle of interpretation to which no reasonable man can object. Now let us apply this wholesome rule to the case before us. What then was the opinion of those to whom the gospel was addressed? *They believed in a future state of rewards and punishments.* Not only the Jews, but the heathen, believed in a future judgment and punishment. For the truth of this, there is the best authority.\* Mr. Balfour, a late writer on your side of the question, has clearly proved on the authority of Dr. Whitby, Dr. Campbell, Le Clerc, and others, that the Jews and all the heathen nations believed in a state of rewards and punishments after death. When we speak of the Jews as believing in a future punishment, it will of course be understood that we except the small sect of the Sadducees, which did not believe in a future state at all. Such then was the opinion of those to whom our Savior and his apostles addressed themselves; they all believed in a future judgment and punishment. I do not mention this as affording direct evidence of a future judgment; but I do contend that it is necessary to consider this circumstance, in order to a right understanding of those passages which speak of a day of judgment. Every person of any discernment must know that the same terms and phrases will be understood differently by different persons, and

\* See Tappan's Lectures on the Jewish Antiquities, Josephus' Works, Bruker's *Historia Critica Philosophica*, Prideaux's *Connections*, &c.

that their different customs and opinions contribute to this in a very great degree. Tell a person in the State of New-York that you will give him a *shilling* for a certain article, and he will understand you mean by the term *shilling*, 12½ cents; but if you tell a person in New-England that you will give him a *shilling*, he will understand you to mean 16½ cents. Now this difference in understanding the same term, arises solely from custom; they being in a habit of reckoning 8, and we but 6 shillings to the dollar. We should both on hearing the word *shilling*, conclude that the person used the word in its common acceptation with us, and so should understand it differently.

And it is precisely so with regard to matters of opinion. For instance, the phrase, *great God*, would convey very different ideas to different persons. All persons who have enjoyed the light of revelation, would understand the phrase to denote the self-existent Jehovah. But the heathen who believed that *Jupiter*, the son of Saturn, was the greatest of all the gods, would understand the phrase, *great God*, to denote Jupiter. It is manifest therefore, that every person, when he hears any language made use of, will interpret it according to his own opinion, or in other words, will understand it in its common acceptation, unless he is expressly told that the terms are to be understood in another sense. Now any Christian who should go among the heathen, and speak in praise of the great god, with a knowledge that they would, of course, understand him to allude to Jupiter, would be accused of dishonesty. And he could not vindicate himself against this charge, without saying that he meant to confirm them in their opinions, being persuaded of their truth. Every person who means to be understood, will vary his language according to the opinions of those to whom he speaks.

Now let it be distinctly remembered that those to

whom Christ and his apostles addressed themselves, were believers in a *future judgment*. "Now if this doctrine be false," says a judicious writer,\* "we should naturally expect that Christ would have offered something directly against it; or if he had not thought proper to have done this, he would have avoided the use of expressions, which are calculated by their natural import to support the doctrine. We think it will not be denied, that a number of passages, with comparatively few exceptions, have been understood by the Christian world to refer to, and clearly support the belief of such a period. For instance, let us take the expression of our Lord. *For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.* These words are spoken without comment to a people who already believed in a future judgment and retribution, and were written as a standing testimony of our Savior for the benefit of their posterity, who would naturally interpret them according to these circumstances. It is a well known fact, that every man who means to be understood, calculates to adapt his language to the situation of his hearers in such a manner, as to accommodate himself to their customs and usages. People seldom think, when a man uses their language, that he means something very different, unless particularly instructed that such is his meaning, or his known sentiments and mode of speaking suggest the idea. But we know not that Jesus ever offered any plainer language on this subject, than has reached our times. To bring this matter to ourselves, we think the public will bear us testimony, that our brethren who oppose our views on

\* Rev. Samuel C. Loveland, of Reading, Vt. I will embrace this opportunity to recommend to the attention of the public, five "Dissertations on future punishment," written by our author, and published in Vol. IV. of the Christian Repository, of which he was then the Editor, as an able defence of our views on this subject. I shall avail myself of several quotations from them on the subject of the *judgment*.

this subject, very seldom or never find occasion in their writing or sermons, to mention such passages of scripture without a labored comment, to show that they do not favor either future punishment, or the common doctrine of endless misery. And why is this? No doubt, because they suppose the public prejudices are such, that those texts cannot safely be adverted to without being misunderstood. Well, if the public are liable to be led astray by the natural import of such passages now, were they in a better situation in the days of Christ?"\*

Since Christ and his apostles, when speaking to those who believed in a future judgment and punishment, used language which naturally teaches such a doctrine, it is manifest that they meant to inculcate that doctrine. They could not with any propriety, nay, they could not with common honesty, use such language to persons in that situation, unless they intended to countenance a future retribution. And the use you make of such passages is evidence of this. The prevalence of the doctrine of a future judgment and punishment in the apostolic age, will account for the manner in which the sacred writers have treated it. They do not introduce it very frequently, and when they do, they do not labor the point so fully as they do some others. This circumstance, however, instead of weakening the evidence, tends to strengthen it. It shows that this opinion was not disputed, and that the little they said would be readily understood; and this was confirming the doctrine in the strongest manner possible. St. Paul, when writing to his own countrymen, speaks of a future judgment as a truth admitted by all. He refers to it as to an acknowledged fact, and makes use of it to illustrate the death and resurrection of Christ. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment, so

\* Christian Repository, Vol. IV. pp. 11, 12.



Christ once offered up himself.”\* This passage not only contains direct proof of a future judgment, but it goes also to show that a future judgment was believed by the Hebrews. St. Paul assumed it as an admitted principle, as a truth of the greatest notoriety, which he never would have done, if this opinion had not been prevalent. When the same apostle assumes the *universality* of the atonement,† and argues from it as a truth of notoriety, the passage, as you will admit, contains the greatest proof possible, that Christ died for all. It not only shows that this was the apostle’s opinion, but it shows at the same time, that those to whom he wrote acknowledged the same truth. And so of the passage in Hebrews. The apostle in that passage not only teaches his belief in a *judgment after death*, but he teaches us at the same time, that this was a sentiment which none who believed in a future state, presumed to call in question.

Having hinted that but few passages comparatively apply to a future state at all, and consequently that the passages which treat of a future judgment, cannot be very numerous ;—that the very idea of judgment includes punishment ;—that all passages which designate any *particular period* as the time of judgment, necessarily involve a future retribution ;—and that those to whom the gospel was first preached, were believers in a future state of rewards and punishment, and consequently that the New Testament writers could not with safety or even with honesty use such language as they did, unless they intended to teach a future judgment—we will now call your attention to some of those scriptures which appear to inculcate the doctrine in question.

The first text I shall introduce to prove a future judgment is Acts xxiv. 25 ; “And as Paul reasoned of

\* Heb. ix. 27, 28.

† 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

righteousness, temperance, and a *judgment to come*, Felix trembled.”—We have already seen that a belief in a future judgment prevailed generally in the days of Christ and his apostles. Felix probably believed in that sentiment, though like most men in power, he thought but little upon religious subjects. Or at least, he must have heard of the doctrine, and on hearing Paul treat upon that subject, the principle of fear was excited. Upon this passage Mr. Loveland remarks,\* “The apostle’s reasoning upon righteousness and temperance, in connexion with a judgment to come, set home to Felix’s mind a strong conviction for his iniquity, and powerfully portrayed to his view, the unhappy and lasting consequences of a wicked life. Is it not reasonable to conclude that the cause of Felix’s trembling was his hearing the doctrine of righteousness and temperance clearly explained, and the practice more powerfully enforced; and in addition to this, a future judgment and consequent punishment for wickedness, more certain and more terrible than he was accustomed to hear? Can it be rationally accounted for on any other consideration? On the other hand, had St. Paul reasoned on these subjects as many of our preachers now do, would Felix or any other man like him, be likely to tremble? Had Felix totally disbelieved the doctrine of future punishment, and St. Paul had reasoned against it, what could have made him tremble? Had Felix believed the doctrine of future punishment, and Paul had reasoned contrary to his views, his attention would have been called to less punishment than he believed, of course no one could suppose that in that case, he would have trembled. Hence it is perceived, that the text cannot but have a strong bearing in favor of future punishment from this consideration.”

Your remark upon the passage, is, *that it gives no*

\* Christian Repository, Vol. IV. p. 132.

*intimation that the judgment is in a future state.\** It is true, the passage itself does not expressly mention a future state, neither does it mention the present state ; it is equally silent upon both. But the expression, *judgment to come*, or *future judgment*, seems to carry the mind into a future state, much more naturally than to confine it to this. And we have seen that a rational account can be given of Felix's trembling, by applying the passage to a future state ; but if the passage be applied to this world, we can give no probable cause of his trembling. Neither can you, on your system, make any tolerable sense of the passage. Paul spoke of a judgment *to come*. But on your exposition, the phrase, *to come*, is totally senseless. Why did the apostle use the expression, *to come*, unless the event was future ? But on your scheme, the judgment is as much past as future. Men, after St. Paul made this declaration, received only their just desert, and this, according to your views, is what they have always experienced. Paul, therefore, had he believed with you, might have reasoned of a past or present judgment, with as much propriety as of a future one. Suppose then Paul had reasoned of a present judgment, instead of Felix's trembling, he would probably have regarded it as an insult, and told the apostle that he knew his own feelings, as well as any other person knew them. To pretend, as you probably will, that this judgment was then future, but still in the present world, is in fact renouncing your system. For if Felix stood exposed to some signal judgment, for the crimes of which he had been guilty, then he was not sufficiently punished for his sins as he passed along ; and this being the case, it argues the need of a future judgment.

Another passage in point is Acts xvii. 30, 31. "And the times of this ignorance, God winked at, but now

\* Reply to Merritt, p. 18.

commandeth all men every where to repent ; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all, in that he hath raised him from the dead." On this passage I shall adopt the remarks of my worthy friend.\*

1. "If the punishment of sin is always immediately and inseparably connected with the act, we know not how God winked at the "times of ignorance," any more than under the dispensation in which the light of the gospel shone.

2. God's appointing *a day* to judge the world, denotes some particular period. Did it denote *any day* whatever, it could not be an *appointed day*.

3. It being an appointed day to judge the world, the judgment must of course naturally follow the works of the world, for which it is to be judged.

4. God's calling all men every where to repent, is enforced from the consideration that *all men* are to be judged in the day which God has appointed.

5. If the day which God has appointed, denotes some specified period, and not *any time* whatever, and was in the apostolic age, then the text does not call upon those of after ages to repent, from the consideration that there will be a judgment ; because the judgment is already past.

6. But if the judgment is some particular period, and all the world are to be judged, it will follow that that day of judgment is in future life."

To avoid the force of this passage, you labor to show that the word, *judge*, signifies to *rule*. But if this should be granted, it would be nothing to your purpose. For the very idea of *ruling*, supposes a law, and a law supposes a penalty, which will be inflicted in case of transgression. So that your assertion, *there is nothing*

\* See Christian Repository, Vol. IV. p. 133.

*said of condemning any,\** is entirely futile. But let us look for a moment to the consistency of your exposition. You apply the passage to what you call the *gospel day* in this state, and explain it to mean that Christ will rule the world by his gospel. But you say, *there is nothing said of condemning any*, that is, no one will be punished in this world! Thus would you argue all punishment, both present and future, out of existence. So that if your remarks have any weight in this case, they oppose your views as much as they do mine.

Hebrews ix. 27, 28, next claims our attention. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the *judgment*; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." This passage asserts in the plainest manner that the *judgment is after death*. And the apostle's mentioning this as a truth of notoriety, shows that it was then an acknowledged doctrine. The view I have given of the text is natural and easy; it is the most obvious sense of the passage. The scriptures being given for the benefit of mankind at large, the majority of whom are far from being critics, that interpretation which most naturally presents itself to the unbiassed mind, is generally preferable to that interpretation which is forced upon a passage to make it harmonize with a preconceived opinion. The exposition you give of the passage is so far-fetched and unnatural, that I presume that not one in a hundred would ever have hit upon it; and it would be casting a reproach upon the Deity, to say that he has given us a revelation which would mislead ninety-nine hundredths of his children. Your interpretation of the passage is this;—As the high priest under the law died in his sacrifice; so Christ once died. That the reader may see how far your exposition differs from the text, I

\* Reply to Merritt, p. 16.

will subjoin the passage, and place your exposition rectly under it in *italics*.

"And as it is appointed unto men

*And as it is appointed unto men, who are high priests,*

"once to die;

*to die figuratively in their sacrifices;*

"but after this the judgment; so Christ was once, &c.

*but after this, justification; so Christ was once, &c.*

By the above it will be seen that you both add to, take from the passage. You leave out the emphatic *once*, and add the clauses, *who are high priests*, and *uratively in their sacrifices*. You also substitute word *justification*, for that of *judgment*. But is not taking undue latitude in explaining the word of G Grant me such latitude, and I can make the script teach whatever I please.

But you attempt to justify your exposition by the nexion. You say, "Writing to the Hebrews, the ap very prudently endeavored to lead their minds into true knowledge of Christ by using the *rites of the dispensation*, to which they were religiously attache represent Jesus and his ministry of reconciliatio This statement, though true in the main, is not fully rect; or, does not embrace the whole truth. The s tle alluded to the law dispensation, but this is not all frequently called their attention to events which u no part of that dispensation. It was the design of apostle to recommend the gospel to his brethren showing them that it was quite similar to somet which they already believed. That the apostle did confine himself to the "rites of the law dispensati appears by his referring to Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abra Isaac, Jacob, Melchisedec, &c.† persons who existed before the giving of the law. The apostle not only c pares Christ and his gospel with persons and ev prior to the giving of the law, but in this very epistl

\* Sermon on Heb. ix. 27, 28.

† Chaps. v. vi. xi.

compares our Savior with mankind, that is, with men in all ages. His words are—"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."\* Here Paul found that the "rites of the law dispensation failed him, and to represent the character of our great High Priest perfectly, he had recourse to natural things; he compares him with the children of men generally. Again, he compares Jesus with mankind. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."† Here again, Paul referred to mankind to set forth the Savior's character in its proper light. But why did Paul leave the Mosaic dispensation? For this good reason; he found nothing in the rites of that dispensation which would answer his purpose on this point. And knowing that an undoubted fact drawn from any source, would answer his purpose equally as well, he referred to the constitutional infirmities of men, to show that our Lord was subject by nature to the same infirmity. And here the figure was complete. As men partake of flesh and blood, so Christ partook of the same. Thus it will be seen, that instead of confining himself to the "rites of the law dispensation," the apostle had recourse to any acknowledged fact, which would serve his purpose in setting forth our Savior's character and labors correctly. In the passages we have already cited, we have seen that he refers to mankind at large, to exhibit one trait in the Redeemer's character. And so in the passage in question. The death and appearing of Christ, are represented by men's suffering literal death, and appearing again at the judgment. It is also worthy of remark, that the passages we have quoted teach us that Christ took

\* Heb. iv. 15.

† Heb. ii. 14.

upon himself our mortal nature, that he *might* *slay* death. He took flesh and blood, says the passage, "*through death*, he might destroy the devil." This sage virtually tells us, that Christ took our mortal nature, that he might die like mortal creatures. As the apostle refers to mankind to represent Christ taking his mortal nature, we may naturally suppose that he would refer to men to represent his laying down. And this he has done in the passage before. As men die once, so Christ once died.

But you say, the apostle "in the context draws parallel between the high priest under the law, and great apostle and high priest of our Christian profession."\* This is readily admitted. But he finds figure fail him. The high priest offered his sacrifice *yearly*; but Christ died but *once*; the high priest *not die literally*, but Christ *did*. Here then was a great dissimilarity. The high priest as a figure failed him in two important particulars. This the apostle acknowledges when he says, verses 25th and 26th, "Nor that he should offer himself *often*, as the high priest thereth into the holy place *every year* by the blood of *others*; for then must he *often* have suffered since foundation of the world; but now *once* in the end of world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of *himself*." It will be seen by this quotation, that the apostle confesses that the parallel between Christ and the high priest did not hold good in all cases. It fails him in two important particulars, viz. 1. The Jewish sacrifices were offered *often*, but the Christian but *once*. 2. The high priest offered the *blood of others*, but Christ offered his *own*. The Jewish high priest and sacrifice failing him, the apostle has recourse to another figure which would express the very thing he desired, viz. Christ died *literally*, and died but *once*. And this

\* Sermon on Heb. ix. 27, 28.



finds in the condition of mankind. As in a former case, he refers to mankind to represent Christ's *taking immortality*, so here he refers to mankind to represent his *laying it down*. Accordingly in the verse next following those last quoted, he introduces the human kind as a figure to represent the process through which Christ had to pass. His words are—"And as it is appointed unto men *once to die*, but after this the judgment; so Christ was *once offered* to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Here the parallel is drawn, not between Christ and the high priest, but between Christ and mankind. As men die literally once, and after this appear at the judgment; so Christ died once literally, and after this, will appear again. Thus, Sir, the context, instead of supporting your exposition, goes directly to support the one for which we contend.

We will now attend to the language of the passage. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die." The comparison expressed by the conjunction, *as*, relates to the number of times. As men die *once*, so Christ died *once*. But on your exposition, the comparison is entirely lost, as we shall presently show. "As it is *appointed* unto men once to die." The scriptures represent man's continuance on earth as fixed; the time of his death as *appointed*. Job says, "Is there not an *appointed* time to man on the earth?"\* Again, he says, "Thou hast *appointed* his bounds which he cannot pass."† Well then might the apostle say, it is appointed unto men once to die. The passage says, "it is appointed unto *men* to die." The word *men* is here used without any qualification or limitation, and consequently must apply to mankind at large. To limit this to a part of mankind,

\* Job vii. 1.

† Job xiv. 5.

and especially to the Jewish high priests alone, violate all just rules of interpretation. Who ever tho that the term, *men*, in scripture, meant the Jewish priests? Your exposition violates the language of passage. Suppose we should take this liberty with scripture, and wherever the word *men* occurs should "who are high priests." Take Paul's language to *no*thy for instance. "God is the Savior of all men;" then add by way of explanation, "*men, who are priests;*" and it would express a sentiment which would be the last to admit. But still we have as authority to make this addition here, as you have to it in the passage in Hebrews. Besides, if we sh admit this unauthorized and arbitrary addition, it w introduce absurdity into the passage. "As it is app ed unto high priests once to die, so Christ once di Now the death of Christ was literal; he died a temp death. But did the high priest die literally in your of the text? No—you yourself do not pretend this. high priest in your sense of the text did not die a The apostle says, he entered into the holy place by *blood of others*. Now what parallel is there between high priest who did not die at all, and Christ who die? As to your explanation, *to die in their sacrifice* is entirely arbitrary. *To die in a sacrifice* would be a strained figure indeed. Who ever thought of as that a *butcher was dead*, simply because he had k an animal! But this would be no more unnatural your explanation. And further; if we admit this ad ed interpretation of the term *die*, the difficulty w not be surmounted. The high priest died; *every y* he died *often*, as the apostle expresses it; and c frequently there could be no propriety in saying that appointed to him *once* to die. Upon the whole, interpretation destroys the whole force and harmo the passage. It would come precisely to this;—*As*

*appointed to high priests to offer sacrifices often, so Christ died once!* Now what resemblance is there between the high priests offering a sacrifice and Jesus Christ's suffering temporal death ; or between the high priests offering sacrifices *often*, and Christ's dying *once!* We cannot ascribe a comparison like this to an inspired apostle.

We will now attend to your explanation of the word *judgment*. You think you "have proved beyond contradiction," that the word, *judgment*, means in this passage, *holiness, light, and perfection*, or in one word, *justification*. But to me this is far from being evident. For the quotation you have made from Exodus fails of its object. There is no evidence that the word, *judgment*, *there* mean justification. And if that should be granted, that passage has nothing to do in explaining the word judgment in Hebrews. The word judgment in the scriptures is almost invariably used to signify *condemnation, trial, or punishment*. This is particularly true of the New Testament. Now we ought by all fair rules of interpretation to explain the word judgment in the passage before us, in its general acceptation, especially as the passage and subject both require it. Let St. Paul be his own expositor, and the subject will be perfectly clear. St. Paul uses the word judgment very frequently, but I think not to signify *justification*. There is one passage, and one too which you quote as applying to this same subject, which we will notice. Paul says, "as by the offence of one, *judgment* came upon all men to *condemnation*."\* But how would it answer here to say, *justification* came upon all men to *condemnation!* If we should substitute the word *justification* for *judgment* in the New Testament, it would make singular sense of nearly all the passages where the term occurs. St. Peter for instance, speaks of those who are "reserved to the day of judgment to be punished." But how would it answer

\* Rom. v. 18.

to read it, reserved to the day of *justification* to be *punished*? Every person who reads the New Testament with any degree of attention, must be sensible that the word *judgment* almost invariably signifies *condemnation* or *trial*. But the course you pursue in relation to the signification of terms, is very singular. In the last general passage which we quoted, you explained the term *judge* to signify *to rule*; but in this, you explain the word *judgment* to signify *justification*. But if all this liberty is allowable, we can make the sacred book mean what we please.

The remarks we have made upon the word *judgment*, will apply to the original word from which *judgment* is rendered. The Greek word *κρισις*, here rendered *judgment*, is defined by Parkhurst to signify, *judgment, justice, judgment of condemnation, condemnation, damnation, the ground of condemnation or punishment*. Here are several definitions, but there is not one which even approximates towards the sense of *justification*. *Κρισις* is rendered *damnation* in Matt. xxiii. 33. "How can ye escape the *damnation* of *hell*." But how would it appear to render it, the *justification* of *hell*? This would be calling darkness, *light*, in good earnest. It is also rendered *damnation* in Mark iii. 29. "In danger of eternal *damnation*." But surely the bold blasphemer would not fear eternal *justification*. It is rendered *condemnation* in John v. 24. "Hath everlasting life, and shall not come into *condemnation*." But I hardly think you will maintain that a person can have everlasting life without coming into *justification*. We could multiply remarks of this nature, but it appears too much like trifling with the subject; and had it not been for the forced construction you have given of the word *judgment*, we should not have troubled the reader with these remarks. *Κρισις* or *κρισις* is the term rendered *judgment* in all those passages which speak of *the day of judgment*, where you

yourself will acknowledge that a punishment is threatened. After the foregoing remark, what must we think of your assertion, that you have *proved beyond contradiction* that the word judgment means *justification*? I think it must be obvious to every reader that the word judgment in Hebrews ix. 27, signifies a state of trial at which some will be condemned. The passage now in question clearly teaches a future judgment. It plainly declares that it is after death. This interpretation, as we have seen, is the most obvious, and is supported both by the text and context, while your exposition has the support of neither.

The words of our Savior in Matt. xi. 23, 24, plainly teach the doctrine for which we are pleading. "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."—This passage clearly teaches us that Sodom and Capernaum are to be arraigned at a particular period called *the day of judgment*. Our Savior speaks of this judgment as a future event. He speaks of it as future in relation to Sodom as well as Capernaum. By Sodom our Savior must mean that ancient, corrupt city which was destroyed by fire from heaven; for her overthrow is mentioned in the passage. Now as the Sodomites were all destroyed so as to leave no descendants, it is manifest, that Jesus must have alluded to those very persons who perished with the city. And as Sodom was destroyed long before our Savior's day, and her judgment was then future, it is clear that it must be in a future state. And as Capernaum is to be judged at the same day of judgment, her judgment must be in a future state also. And as it is to be *more tolerable* for one than the other at this day

of judgment, one at least must be subjected to a state of chastisement.

In the preceding verse, the Redeemer says, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you." The remarks made upon the case of Sodom and Capernaum will apply here. The inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, alluded to in this passage, were those who were impenitent *long ago*. But our Savior speaks of their judgment in the future tense. The judgment of Chorazin and Bethsaida is represented as no more future than that of Tyre and Sidon. Thus does the divine Teacher plainly assert that Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon, Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida shall all be arraigned at a day of judgment; and this judgment was future in his day, though this was hundreds of years after some of them had departed this life. Hence this judgment must be in a future life.

But here I anticipate your objection. You maintain that this judgment was threatened upon the *land* or city, and not upon the inhabitants.\* This interpretation you attempt to support by the language of the passage, "It shall be more tolerable for the *land* of Sodom than for thee." Upon this objection we will offer the following remarks. In the 23d verse, where Chorazin and Bethsaida are compared with Tyre and Sidon, the word *land* does not occur. And in the parallel passages, Mark vi. 11, and Luke x. 14, the word *land* is omitted. Now if the whole exposition of the passage depends upon the word, *land*, then Mark and Luke omitted an important part of Christ's declaration. Nay, they omitted that part on which *alone*, the only consistent interpretation

\* Reply to Damon, U. Magazine, Vol. II.

rests. But it must be obvious that Matthew meant no more by "the land of Sodom," than the other evangelists did by "Sodom."

That person must be very ignorant of language, who does not know that the word *land*, is very frequently used to mean the people who dwell in the land. This is a *metonymy*, that is, a figure of speech, where the thing *containing* is put for the things *contained*. And it is truly astonishing that a gentleman of your talents should rest an argument upon such a slender foundation. The practice you adopt upon other subjects plainly shows that you regard the interpretation of this passage as weak. You constantly quote passages like these—Christ came to save the *world*; he is the Savior of the *world*; God so loved the *world*, &c. But what should you think of a person who attempted to avoid the just inference from these passages, by saying that the word *world* does not mean *men*, but simply the *material system*? Again, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the *ends of the earth*." This passage you quote in favor of the ultimate happiness of all men. But if you believe that the term *land*, or *earth*, does not mean the people, but simply the *ground* or *soil*, you are surely guilty of perverting the divine record. You cannot be insensible that the term *land*, is frequently used to signify the people who dwell in the land. God by the prophet says to Israel, "All nations shall call you blessed; for *ye* shall be a delightful *land*."\* Here the word *land* is explained to mean *the people*. Can you seriously believe that when Christ compared the city of Capernaum, with that of Sodom, that he used the term *city* to signify not the people, but the land on which the city was built? The same evangelist tells us that on a certain occasion, "The *whole city* came out to meet Jesus; and when *they* saw him, *they* besought that he would depart

\* Mal. iii. 12.

out of *their* coasts.”\* Now according to your interpretation, we must suppose that the *land*, that is, the literal *earth* or *soil*, *went out* to meet the Lord, and that *they*, that is, the *earth*, desired that he would depart out of *their* coasts ! But we should suppose that a person who should contend for such an interpretation, was desirous of turning the Bible into ridicule. Besides, in the immediate connexion of the passage which he compares Sodom and Capernaum, the evangelist has explained the term *city* to signify the *people*. Matthew introduces the comparison between those ancient cities which were destroyed for their wickedness, and those cities which abused the preaching of the gospel, by saying,† “Then began he to upbraid the *cities* wherein most of his mighty works were doné, because *they repented* not.” Because who *repented* not ? Say, Sir, was it the *inhabitants* ? or the *literal land* ? You must see that the evangelist was speaking of the people, and not of the literal *land* or *soil*. By the *land of Sodom*, therefore, the *people of Sodom* were intended. Moreover, what propriety would there be in comparing the *inhabitants* of one place, with the *literal land* or *soil* of another ? It would be a gross absurdity, which we cannot ascribe to our divine Master. But after all, if the *literal land* is meant by *Sodom*, you are hereby called upon to show that the land of Capernaum suffered a *more complete destruction* than the land of Sodom, which was destroyed by fire from heaven, continued burning for a long period, and has been desolate ever since.‡

Another method which has been adopted to evade the force of this passage, is to interpret the *future* tense to convey the *past* idea. On this system of interpretation

\* Matt. viii. 34.

† Chap. xi. 20.

‡ See Christian Repository, Vol. III. p. 82, and Vol. IV. p. 137, where good justice is done to this subject, by Mr. Loveland, to whom I am indebted for some of the above hints.



the phrase, *shall be*, is made to signify, *hath been*.\* But those who contend for this interpretation are not able to produce a single instance in which the sacred writers have ever used the *future* tense to express an event which had already been accomplished. Now is it allowable to construe scripture in such a manner, especially when we are not able to produce a single example from the sacred record? If this right is assumed, instead of *interpreting*, we actually contradict the scriptures; it is trampling the sacred volume under our feet. In this manner every future event in divine revelation can be done away. We may therefore shut our Bibles; for on this principle of interpretation there is nothing contained therein which reaches forward to our time!

But we are told that Jesus spoke of Sodom's destruction in this passage as a *past* event.—But what of that? Does it follow that her *judgment* is past, because her *overthrow* has been accomplished? We might as well pretend that a criminal has had his trial, because he has been taken by the officer. Because Sodom's *overthrow* is understood to be past, agreeable to the declaration of Christ, are we to conclude that another event, her *judgment*, must be past also, in direct opposition to the same divine Teacher? Because we believe Christ's declaration in one verse, must we, to be consistent, contradict a declaration of his, equally express, in the next! This is what these gentlemen require of us. But whoever will look at the language of the passage, will see that the judgment of Capernaum is represented to be future, no more than that of Sodom. They are both united together, and the same expression is applied to them both. The phrase, *shall be*, is applied to them taken together, and of course must have the same signi-

\* See Philadelphia U. Magazine, edited by Rev. A. Kneeland. Also Balfour's Reply to Sabine, pp. 63—66. For the character of Mr. Balfour's works, see P. S. to this Letter.

fication relative to both. To contend, as the advocates for this objection in reality do, that the self-same phrase, occurring but once, has two distinct and diametrically opposite significations at the same time, is violating every principle of interpretation, and destroying the meaning of all language.

The phrase, *shall be*, has but one signification, and it must be either in the *past*, *present*, or *future* tense. Now if the event was *past*, when our Savior uttered the words of the passage, then Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida were judged and condemned in the days of Sodom. The crime of which Capernaum and the other cities were guilty, was this ;—they abused the miracles and preaching of Christ. Now if their judgment was *past*, when Jesus addressed them in the language of this passage, then, they were judged and condemned for a crime long before it was committed, and before those who committed it were born ! Thus does the exposition I am opposing, involve its advocates in the grossest absurdity. But let us see if we can make the passage consistent by understanding it in the *present* tense. If the judgment was present, when the passage was spoken, then the judgment of Sodom was in our Savior's day, though this was hundreds of years after her destruction, and consequently must be in a future state. And as it regards Capernaum, she was judged, and *cast down to hell*, and *exalted up to heaven*, at the *same moment of time* ! But if the judgment of Sodom and Capernaum was future when the passage was spoken, as it must be to avoid the absurdities we have mentioned, then it is evident that their judgment must be in a future state of being. Thus it will be seen, that the interpretation we have given is consistent, and has the support of the language of the passage, and cannot be overthrown without expressly contradicting the words of our Savior, and involving the absurdity, that Capernaum, &c. were judged and condemned for a crime *long* before it was committed.

It seems obvious from the nature of the case, that Sodom was not equitably punished by her temporal destruction. We have seen in a former Letter, that her destruction by fire could not be apportioned to the deserts of every individual. All were involved in one common ruin; the innocent suffered destruction as much as the guilty. Now as God has declared that he will reward every man according to his deeds, and as this equitable retribution could not, from the very nature of the case, take place with the Sodomites at the destruction of their city, it follows that Sodom's *temporal destruction* and her *judgment* are two distinct and separate events, and that her judgment must be in a future state. And as Capernaum and Sodom are to be judged at the same day of judgment, it follows that her judgment must be in a future state also.

The view I have taken of the punishment of Sodom is confirmed by the prophet Ezekiel.\* He teaches us that the restoration of the Sodomites was future in his day, and in fact, that Sodom should not be returned to divine favor until all the Jews are brought in. You quote the 16th of Ezekiel† to prove the salvation of Samaria and Sodom. In this manner you concede to the truth of my statement. For if the prophet was speaking of their salvation in the passage you have quoted, then their salvation is future. Ezekiel tells us, that the salvation of Sodom and of Israel will be *simultaneous*. Now as Israel is not yet restored, it is manifest that Sodom is still in her captivity, and will remain in this state of darkness, till Israel shall find favor with God. Thus does the prophet confirm the interpretation we have given to the words of our Lord. Jesus speaks of Sodom's *judgment* as *future*, and the prophet tells us, that Sodom will not be returned to God's favor, until the Jews are redeemed from their sufferings. From what

\* Chap. xvi. 46—63. † Parables, pp. 275, 276, 277.

has been offered upon this subject, I trust it appears that Sodom, Capernaum, &c. stand exposed to a future judgment. This will appear more clear when we shall have attended to the next passage, which I shall bring forward.

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” 2 Pet. ii. 9. This passage, like the one before examined, speaks of a *future day of judgment*. At this judgment the unjust are to be punished; for they are *reserved* to that day for that very purpose. But if the wicked are punished to the full desert of their crimes, as they pass along, there is no such thing as *reserving* any person to any particular period to be punished; because they are punished at all times—at one period as much as at another. By examining this passage in its connexion, we learn that St. Peter was treating of a future judgment in the context. In the 4th verse of this chapter, St. Peter not only speaks of a future judgment, but he speaks of it as a truth generally admitted. “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them unto chains of darkness to be reserved unto the judgment.”—It is not material to our present purpose, to determine whether the angels spoken of in this passage, are kings of a higher order than men, or whether they are human beings. It is sufficient to say they were beings who sinned, and did not receive their full recompense in the act of sinning, but were *reserved* to the day of judgment to receive the full reward of their iniquity. But with what propriety could the apostle use such language, if men were equitably punished in the very act of transgression? Besides, the apostle introduces this as an admitted principle. “For if God spared not the angels that sinned,” &c. As much as though he had said, *since it is admitted that these sinners were not*

*punished in the act of transgression, but are reserved to the day of judgment to be punished.* The apostle here speaks of a future judgment as a truth of notoriety. Mr. Balfour, when remarking upon this very passage, shows that the heathen generally, and *those also to whom the epistle was addressed*, were believers in a *future retribution*.\* St. Peter knew that he was addressing those who believed in a future judgment, and if this doctrine had been erroneous, he would, *he must*, as an honest man, and especially as an inspired apostle, have corrected their mistake. He surely would have informed them, that their ideas on this subject were false. But instead of even intimating that this opinion was unfounded, he uses his endeavors to confirm them in their opinion. He adopts their language, and admits the principle in relation to the angels that sinned. But this is not all, he not only admits the principle true relative to the angels, but he makes it a general principle, and applies it to "all those that after should live ungodly."

St. Jude speaks in almost the same language. His words are—"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Verse 6. Now it matters not what beings are intended here by the term *angels*, neither is it of any consequence to our argument, whether the apostles quoted this from some *apocryphal* book, or not. They use the language, and make the sentiment their own. The passage therefore, speaks the real sentiments of the apostles. St. Paul, on a certain occasion, quotes the heathen poets; but as he quotes them with approbation, you yourself contend that it is as full to the purpose for which it is brought, as though the apostle had used his own language.† Now both Peter and Jude

\* Inquiry, pp. 73—88.

† Acts xvii. 28, 29. See 2 Reply to Merritt, p. 31.

were addressing those who believed in a future judgment and punishment; and they adopted the language of those to whom they wrote, with a perfect knowledge that their readers would understand this language as teaching a retribution beyond death. This clearly shows that the apostles meant to give currency to that opinion. On any other supposition, their fidelity and faithfulness cannot be defended. But perhaps it may be said, that the apostles spoke in accommodation to the feelings and prejudices of the people. To this we reply;—if the apostles considered the doctrine of a future judgment and punishment an error, they not only accommodated themselves to the prejudices of their readers, but took the most effectual method to confirm them in their prejudices. The apostles availed themselves of the sentiments and language of those to whom they wrote, and never gave any intimation that they themselves used this language, to convey any meaning different from that, which their readers had attached to such language. This was literally telling them that their language and opinions were both correct. The apostles then, it would seem, must have been pitifully weak, or basely dishonest, to have written as they did, on supposition that they believed a future judgment, to be a falsehood. But whoever will look, for one moment, at the conduct of the apostle Peter, will be convinced that he was not disposed to sacrifice truth to save the feelings of the people. This apostle, after the resurrection of his Master, was ready at all times to vindicate the truth, though at the peril of his life. On the day of Pentecost, he openly accused the Jews of the murder of his Master, and severely reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart.\* We cannot believe that St. Peter, who was so willing to reproach the Jews by vindicating the truth, would all at once become so afraid

\* Acts ii. 22—36.

of offending the people, as to volunteer his service in approving of their sentiments which he believed to be false.

Do you think, Sir, that conduct, such as this objection ascribes to the apostles, is commendable? Would you, when addressing those whom you knew to be believers in a future judgment and punishment, make use of such language, as the apostles have done, and like them leave it without comment, to have its own influence upon the people? I say you would not. Whoever will read your writing with a view to this subject, will find that you have cautiously avoided such language. In this manner you tacitly confess that this language naturally teaches a future judgment and punishment. Now if St. Peter and St. Jude were as faithful to their trust, as you are to yours, they surely would have avoided such language, if they had been with you in opinion. We have already seen that those to whom the apostle addressed himself were believers in a future retribution. Now it appears obvious that St. Peter meant to countenance this opinion; or in other words, he told them that he agreed with them in sentiment. This is plainly taught in the introduction of the epistle, which begins with these words—"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, *to them that have obtained like precious faith with us*, through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ."\* Thus we see that, instead of Peter's mentioning a sentiment of theirs, only on the principle of accommodation, without designing to give it his authority; he mentions it as *his own*, as an opinion held in common by them both. For he tells us that there was no difference of opinion between them, having both *obtained the like precious faith*.

Now let us look at the language of Peter taken in its proper connexion. Verse 4, "For if God spared not

\* 2 Peter i. 1.

the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." This passage will justify the following remarks. 1. The apostle speaks of a *future judgment* as a truth generally admitted. 2. He tells us that these sinners were cast down to *hell*. The word *ταρταρος*, here rendered *hell*, was used by all cotemporary writers to signify a *state of misery in another world*. Hence it is altogether likely that Peter used the word *hell* in that sense. 3. It appears that these angels were not sufficiently punished in the act of transgression, for they are *reserved to the judgment to be punished*. 4. It is also evident that what is here said relative to these *angels*, (or *messengers*, as some have rendered it) is true of all other sinners, for the apostle applies this principle to mankind at large. Verse 9, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to *reserve* the unjust unto the *day of judgment to be punished*." Thus by examining this passage in its connexion, we see that St. Peter was of the opinion that men were not punished to the full amount of their crimes, as they passed along, but that the ungodly were exposed to a future judgment and punishment.

But we are told that this judgment must be of a temporal nature, because Peter mentions Noah and Lot as specimens of those who were delivered out of temptations. They were delivered from the corrupt multitude by whom they were tempted. And so on the other hand, the old world and Sodom are mentioned as specimens of those who were reserved to be punished, and their punishment was only temporal.\*

We readily admit that the old world and Sodom, together with Noah and Lot, are mentioned as examples. But this is in our favor, as it shows that the judgment is *general*. We have already seen that our Savior spoke

\* Balfour's Reply to Sabine, pp. 68, 69.



of the judgment of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, as well as that of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, and represented this judgment as future with regard to them all. We have also seen that Ezekiel represents the recovery of Sodom as an event yet to come. It has also been shown that her temporal destruction could not have been an equitable retribution upon every individual; and that if they went immediately to happiness at death, they were saved by their own dissolution, without either faith or repentance or the mediation of Christ. As it regards the old world, it is manifest that they were not punished according to their deeds by their temporal destruction, for at that time the greatest sinner received no more punishment than the least. Besides, St. Peter, on whose language we are now remarking, informs us elsewhere, that those who were disobedient in the days of Noah, were in *prison* in the days of our Savior. But this passage will be attended to in the sequel. But let us inquire what is meant by *delivering the godly out of temptations*. We will, if you please, take the examples of which Mr. B. speaks—Noah and Lot. Was Noah delivered from temptations so long as he remained in this world? By no means. For after the flood he was tempted, and fell a prey to the wine he had made. “He drank of the wine, and was drunken; and was uncovered in his tent.”\* Thus we see that delivering Noah from the old world, was not delivering him from temptation. The same may be said of Lot. After he left Sodom, he was tempted, and yielded to the temptation. He was not only guilty of drunkenness, and incest, but was guilty of repeating these crimes.† Here we see that Noah and Lot were not delivered from temptations by being taken, one from the old world, and the other from Sodom. St. Peter made the declaration, *the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation*, to

\* Gen. ix. 21.

† Gen. xix. 32—36.

encourage the virtuous, and support them under their trials. But would it yield the saints any support to tell them that the Lord would deliver them from one temptation, and bring them into another, which would be so great as to overcome them? It would not. Then we must suppose that something more was meant by delivering Lot and Noah, than taking the former from Sodom, and the latter from the old world. Their deliverance was not completely effected till they were taken from this world.

What is here said of Noah and Lot, will apply to all the righteous. They are not completely delivered from sinful temptations so long as they inhabit this frail tenement. *But the Lord knoweth how to deliver them*; and he will deliver them out of all their temptations; but the full accomplishment of this is reserved for a future state. Now as the righteous are not fully delivered in this world, it follows that the wicked are not fully punished in this world. Since the former part of the verse does not have its fulfilment here in time, it is manifest that the latter part does not. Further; the unjust are *reserved*, that is, *retained* or *kept*, to the day of judgment to be punished. Thus it appears that they were not punished immediately, but were kept to a certain distant period. This could not be said of the temporal destruction of Sodom; for it is said of her that she was *overthrown in a moment*.\* Mr. Balfour says, "The general meaning of the word, rendered *reserve*, is, 'to keep or reserve something till afterwards.' If it be asked, reserve or keep the unjust, till after what? The answer is, until after the Lord hath delivered the godly out of their temptations."† Here it is acknowledged by one of your own writers that the wicked are not punished, until after the righteous are delivered from their temptations. Now as the righteous are not deliv-

\* *Lam. iv. 6.*

† Reply to Sabine, p. 74.

ered from their temptations, until they leave this world, and the wicked are not to be punished, till after the righteous are delivered, it follows that their punishment will be after death. Or to apply it to the old world and Sodom; as Noah and Lot were not delivered from their temptations, till long after the old world and Sodom experienced their temporal destruction, so this temporal destruction could not be their punishment. No; for after this, they were *reserved or kept* to a future period, *to the day of judgment to be punished*. Thus it appears from the passage in Peter, that there will be a judgment in future life. Both Christ and his apostles teach the same doctrine. They both speak of the judgment as a future event, and both mention Sodom as an example. This not only shows that the judgment is in a future life, but also that it is *general*, including all the nations of the earth.

Another scripture to the same purpose is 2 Cor. v. 8, 9, 10. "We are confident I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labor that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—Upon this passage we remark;—The apostle speaks of being *present with* the body, and *absent from* the body. The one is explained in the context to mean to be in this life, the other in the future. And he says, "we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." Here it will be seen that the apostle labored that he might be accepted, *when absent from the body*, that is, *in a future state*. This implies that there is danger of being rejected after death. It would be useless and absurd to labor for future acceptance, if there was no possibility of any one's being rejected. The con-

sideration of his laboring that he might be accepted, when absent from the body, supposes that there was danger of not being accepted, and that those who did not labor thus, would experience this rejection. The probability of being rejected in a future state, the apostle enforces by this consideration ;—"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body." This clearly shows that the judgment will be after death, when men are absent from the body. The apostle says, verse 6th, "While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." Since at the judgment we are to stand before Christ, and while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord, it is manifest that the judgment must be after death, when we are "absent from the body, and present with the Lord."

The apostle's argument is clear and forcible. In the first place, he informs us that there is danger of being rejected when absent from the body. He then states the grounds of this danger, viz. that there will be a future general judgment, at which some will be rejected. His argument, in a logical form, is briefly this ;—There will be a future, general judgment, at which some will be rejected, therefore we labor that we may not be of that number. The interpretation we have given, makes the apostle's reasoning clear and cogent ; but on your interpretation, his reasoning is entirely destroyed. You understand the "appearing before the judgment-seat of Christ," to take place in this world, to which all punishment is confined. Now let us look at the consistency of the apostle's reasoning, on your exposition of the "judgment-seat." His argument would stand thus ;—We labor that we may not be punished after death, because all punishment is confined to this world ! This actually appears like a burlesque upon the apostle's reasoning, and if it was given by an unbeliever in reve-

lation, I should think that your exposition was designed to bring contempt upon the scriptures. Besides, Paul represents this judgment as future. We have already seen that he tells us in another passage that the judgment is *after death*. So in the passage before us, he tells us that the judgment is a future event. "We *must* stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." But on your interpretation, the judgment is *past* or *present*, as much as *future*. Further ; on your interpretation, none can be judged but those who live under the light of the gospel. But the apostle includes all mankind in this judgment. He says, "we must *all* appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." That all men are the subjects of this judgment, appears not only from the passage before us, but in a parallel passage he places this point beyond dispute. His words are—"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall *all* stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, *every* knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God,"\* Here the apostle speaks of the same *judgment-seat* as in the other passage, and he says we must *all* stand before it. Paul, in this passage, uses the term, *all*, which includes every one spoken of. And it cannot be pretended here, that the apostle, by the term, *we*, meant the apostles or believers only, for he includes those who *judge* and *set at naught their brethren*. Since he included both saints and sinners, it is manifest that the judgment is *universal*. And to confirm this still further, and to place the universality beyond a doubt, he cites a passage from the prophet,† which you yourself contend applies to the whole human family. Having done this, he concludes by saying, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

\* Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12.

† Isa. xlv. 23.

The passage before us teaches a future general judgment. If the judgment be general, it cannot apply to the destruction of Jerusalem, nor signify the gospel dispensation. For a very small part of mankind were upon the earth at the destruction of Jerusalem, or even exist under the gospel dispensation. And if the judgment be future, it must be in a future life. For the whole human family cannot be judged at any one time in this state of being. Again; the apostle speaks of not being accepted, when absent from the body, or in other words in a future state; and this he infers from the fact that there will be a future, general judgment, at which all will stand before Christ. And as this judgment is future, and men cannot be present with the Lord, until they are absent from the body, it follows of course that this judgment must be in a future life.

We have now attended to several passages which speak of *the day of judgment*. Instead of its being *past* or *present*, the sacred writers uniformly represent it as *future*. They speak of it as an event yet to be accomplished. They call it a *judgment to come*, and say it shall be *after death*. Instead of its being an event which is taking place from day to day, they unite in declaring it is to take place at a *particular, specified period*. They say, God hath *appointed*, or *set apart* a day or period for that purpose. And instead of its being confined to the Jewish nation, or to those who are upon the earth at any particular time, they inform us that the judgment is *general*—that Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, shall be judged. Nay, that the *whole world* shall be arraigned, and *all* shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. We have further seen that the very idea of judgment includes that of punishment to a part at least. Nay, several of the passages we have noticed, expressly state that the wicked are *reserved* to this day of judgment to be pun-

ished. And all these passages were addressed to a people who were believers in a future retribution. The inspired penmen speak of a future judgment as a truth which no one who believed in a future existence, pretended to deny. This shows most clearly that the scripture writers meant to teach a future punishment. We cannot defend their faithfulness and integrity on any other supposition.

Several other passages might be quoted in proof of the judgment, but we want them not. Besides, it would swell this work beyond its contemplated size, to notice every scripture which relates to this subject. I will here remark, as I did at the introduction of this Letter, that every text which speaks of a judgment which is to take place at any *specified* time, though it may be in this world, is an argument in favor of a future retribution, as it shows that men are not fully recompensed in the act of transgression. To conclude my remarks upon this subject, I will observe that if the arguments here made use of to prove a future judgment be valid, a future retribution is clearly established. Though a future state of punishment does not necessarily involve a future, general judgment, yet a general judgment involves a future punishment as a necessary consequence.

Before closing this Letter, it may perhaps be profitable to offer something upon the design or utility of a future, general judgment. This is the more necessary, as the advocates for your views generally give an incorrect representation of this subject. They frequently represent the abettors of a future punishment as believing that the judgment will proceed on the principle of a common trial in a court of justice, where witnesses will be called, for the purpose of giving the divine Being correct information relative to the characters of men. And I am sorry to say that you have sometimes offered that which seems to countenance that representation. In

your Sermon on 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9; after stating that it is generally believed that the righteous go to enjoyment, and the wicked to misery at death, you say, page 6th, "Now if this tradition be correct, what need is there of a future judgment? Will it be necessary *in order to ascertain* whether the former sentences were according to justice? Will those who have been in heaven thousands of years, be now called to judgment? Must all their crimes which have been forgiven, now be re-examined, and their souls *be put in jeopardy*? Look on the other hand; here are millions of wretched immortals, who have groaned away many ages in the torments of hell, now permitted to have their trial! But stop—the absurdity of this tradition is too palpable to require further examination."

The first remark I shall offer upon this quotation is, that it is an *entire misrepresentation* of the subject. I do not mean to insinuate that you intentionally misrepresented this sentiment, but I do insist that it is very far from being the *common opinion* entertained by the "learned doctors of the Christian church," as you denominate them. You ask, "Will a future judgment be necessary *in order to ascertain* whether their former sentences were according to justice?" Now this passage implies, that God institutes the judgment *in order to ascertain* what the real characters of men are. Again you ask, "Must all their crimes which have been forgiven, be re-examined, and their souls *be put in jeopardy*?" This implies that the judgment is designed to give the Almighty some new information, relative to the characters of his creatures; and that possibly God will find on strict examination that he has misjudged some of mankind, and so will of course, reverse his sentence, and send some to misery, who have long been in heaven! And this you wish to palm upon the world, as the common opinion relative to a future judgment! Your re-



presentation above is so far from being the common opinion of the "learned doctors," that I very much doubt whether you can produce a *single writer* of any repute, who has advanced any thing like the representation you have given.

But it is nothing to me what others believe on this subject. I write as a single individual, and am not bound to defend any opinion but my own. You say, if some men go immediately to happiness at death, and others go to misery, what need is there of a future judgment? In answer to this, let it be observed, that it is very difficult in many cases, for finite beings to determine the utility of every measure the Deity may be pleased to adopt. It is difficult to determine, why the Lord has permitted evil to enter the world, and yet facts compel us to acknowledge that evils do exist. But believing God to be a benevolent being, we are led to conclude that it will answer some valuable purpose. And so in relation to a future judgment. It may be difficult to ascertain every motive which led the divine Being to institute such a process; but still as God does nothing in vain, we must conclude that some valuable purpose will be answered by such an event. But you think there is an inconsistency in supposing that men will be brought to judgment after they have received a part of their punishment. But the same difficulty exists on your system, and you are as much bound to solve this difficulty, if it be one, as I am. You contend that civil governments are instituted by God. Your words are these—"In relation to the crimes of individuals, we well know that God has instituted penalties, according to the nature of offences, and has given *special directions* concerning their being duly inflicted. This is not only true in respect to Israel, but it is likewise true in respect to all nations."<sup>\*</sup>

Here you expressly state that civil government is

\* Lect. p. 9.

established by God ; that he makes the laws, and gives directions concerning their being executed. Now you maintain that all punishment is confined to this world. But I would ask, is all this punishment inflicted by a civil tribunal ? This you will not pretend. Every person who commits sin, experiences some punishment, before he is taken into custody by a civil officer, and perhaps he may remain for months in prison before he receives his trial and sentence. In this case the man enters into misery, before he is brought to the bar of justice. And I might ask here, as you have done in the other case, if the offender is unhappy as soon as he commits the crime, what need is there of a future trial ? It is strange that you should object to a future judgment, because it involves a principle which is equally attendant upon your own views.

But this objection rests entirely upon the principle that the only object of judgment is to inflict a punishment upon the wicked, and bestow a reward upon the righteous. Now when we shall have attended to the design or utility of the judgment, we shall see that this objection has no force. What then is the design of this judgment day ? It is not the sole object of this judgment, to dispense rewards and punishments. The grand object the Deity has in view in all his judgments is to reform the transgressor, and qualify him for enjoyment. Thus far there is no dispute between us. But punishment, *self-considered*, will never lead men to repentance. It is the influence of the divine spirit or a display of the divine character, which punishment sets home to the mind, that leads the sinner to repentance. Inflict a punishment upon any being, without giving him any knowledge of the being against whom he has sinned, or of the design of those laws he has violated, and it could be regarded in no other light than that of cruelty. Now one great object of a future general judgment undoubt-

edly is, to make a display of the characters of men, and the moral principles of the divine government. Men are not called to judgment for the purpose of giving the judge any new information relative to their characters ; but to make the characters of men known to themselves, and to one another.

The wise man says, "God will bring *every work* into judgment, with *every secret thing*, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."\* The apostle says, "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will *bring to light the hidden things of darkness*, and *make manifest the counsels of the heart*."† Again, says the same apostle, "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire."‡ These texts not only enforce the fact that there will be a general judgment, but they teach us the design of this judgment, or the effect produced by that event. They inform us that the judgment will make manifest not only the outward conduct, but the internal disposition of every man. All will then see the rectitude of the divine administration. The saint will have a more glorious view of the divine character, and the sinner will see the justice of the misery he experiences. This will have a tendency to lead the sinner ultimately to repentance. Many of the dispensations of the Almighty look dark and mysterious to us, while in this world ; but then the veil will be taken away, and the rectitude of the divine character will be obvious to all men. In this world, we frequently see vice triumph over virtue. We have shown in a preceding Letter, that in some cases, the wicked prosper and rejoice in their iniquity, while the virtuous experience great calamities both of body and mind. This furnishes the irreligious with one of their strongest objections against divine Providence. But at judgment this diffi-

\* Eccl. xii. 14.

† 1 Cor. iv. 5.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 13.

culty will be solved. It will then appear that the wicked shall be duly punished, and the virtuous rewarded. These and many other valuable purposes will probably be effected by a general judgment. This view of the subject entirely obviates your objection, and furnishes us with an additional argument in favor of such a judgment.

As to the mode and manner of this judgment, God has not seen fit to inform us. I think, however, we may rationally conclude that the misery which the sinner will be called to experience at that time, will not be inflicted by the immediate hand of God, or any other intelligent agent appointed by God; but that the misery will arise from the sinner's own feelings. If all his iniquity is brought to light, and even the motives of his heart are displayed before him, the obstinate sinner must be unhappy. There will be no need of any executive authority to inflict a punishment upon him; his guilt will be his own tormentor, and a hell will be enkindled within him.

To conclude this Letter, I will observe, that if the views here exhibited, are somewhat repulsive to our feelings, it is nothing more than may be reasonably expected, even admitting the doctrine to be a fact; when Paul reasoned of a *judgment to come*, the unbelieving Felix trembled.

Yours, &c.

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P. S. As we have in these Letters referred to the writings of Mr. Balfour, and shall have occasion in the sequel to notice them again, it will probably be gratifying to the reader, to subjoin a brief account of the nature and merits of his works. Mr. B.'s first and principal work, is, "An Inquiry into the scriptural import of the words, Sheol, Hades, Tartarus, and Gehenna, all translated Hell, in our common English Version." This work evinces a considerable degree of research and pa-

tient investigation, and manifests a good temper of mind. But it seems to have been written without any definite object. He tells us in the very first sentence of his book, that the *simple object* in view is, to examine the foundation on which endless misery is built. He then tells us on the *very same page*, that his object is, *principally*, to determine whether a future punishment is taught in the scriptures. And so he shifts from one to the other, as best answers his purpose. This indefinite object introduces confusion into a considerable part of his book. This circumstance leads us to conclude, that when he wrote his Inquiry, he had no settled plan in view; otherwise we should be under the necessity of making the unfavorable remark, that he was artfully laboring to undermine what he durst not openly attack.

Another feature of his book is, that he seems more desirous of *pulling down*, than *building up*. To gratify this propensity, he has, in expounding some passages, involved himself in the grossest inconsistency. Some of these inconsistencies we may have occasion to notice in the course of these Letters. Mr. B.'s Inquiry was answered by Mr. Sabine in a "Series of Lectures," to which Mr. B. replied. We have already said that the Inquiry was written with candor. But in his Reply to Sabine he seems to have forgotten the spirit manifested in the Inquiry. The Reply abounds with severity and personal reflections, hardly worthy of the Christian, or the gentleman. In his first book Mr. B. maintained a becoming degree of humility; but after his work was before the public, and several extravagant encomiums were lavished upon it, by Newspaper writers, his vanity was excited to that degree, that he came out in a weekly paper, and challenged a confutation of his work! This circumstance is not mentioned to wound Mr. B.'s feelings, but only to suggest to him the propriety of desisting from such a course. As a writer, Mr. B. is circui-

tous and prolix. This will appear from the fact, that he has written 445 pages octavo, to define four words. In point of scholarship, I will remark—though he makes a *great display* of Hebrew and Greek learning, whoever will take the trouble to examine his writings, will readily see that a great part of his criticisms are quotations from other authors. As to his own criticisms, they are almost invariably criticisms upon a single term. And any novice who knows the Hebrew and Greek alphabets, can take Parkhurst's Hebrew and Greek Lexicons, and criticise in the same manner. However, we ought in justice to say, that his writings show more learning than judgment.\*

Mr. B. in the introduction to his Inquiry, gives us to understand that all the principal authors, who have written in defence of Universal Salvation, have been ignorant of their subject, and have only been beating the air; for they proceeded on the ground that there was a punishment in a future state, for those who died impenitent. He flatters himself that he has discovered a new and more advantageous method of attacking the doctrine of endless misery—a method by which its foundation may be swept away in a moment. The plan of attack which Mr. B. has introduced is this;—To show that the words translated *hell* in the scriptures, do not signify misery in a future state, whether temporary or endless. Now if Mr. B. has succeeded in his attempt, if he has proved to demonstration that neither Sheol, Hades, Tartarus nor Gehenna imply misery in a future state, how does this effect the point at issue? All that he has said about the import of these words, may be true, and still future or even eternal misery remains untouched. Endless misery may be taught in other words, though Sheol, Hades, &c. may have no such signification.

\* The remainder of this P. 8. was written by the author of these Letters, and published in the Christian Repository, 1824.

I will now attempt to show that Mr. B.'s plan of attack, instead of being superior to the course usually pursued, does not meet the point in dispute. He maintains, and justly, that Sheol and Hades are synonymous, and signify the *grave*, or rather the *state of the dead in general*. He asserts repeatedly, that they do not signify misery at all. Now if Sheol and Hades do not signify punishment *at all*, then they have no bearing in the case; for certainly endless misery nor future misery cannot be proved false, by putting a limited signification upon words which *do not in any case imply misery*. The third word on which Mr. B. remarks is Tartarus; which he explains as he has Sheol and Hades, not to mean misery. Now in order to ascertain, whether Mr. B. has succeeded in confuting future or eternal punishment, it is proper to leave all he has said upon Sheol, Hades, and Tartarus, out of the question; for surely if they do not mean misery *at all*, as Mr. B. contends, they can have not the least bearing in deciding the question, whether misery be endless. Mr. B. has said repeatedly that neither Sheol, Hades, nor Tartarus is used to signify misery. The only word he allows to signify misery, is Gehenna; and wherever it occurs in the New Testament, it is, he says, applied to the Jews, and expresses those judgments, and those only, which fell upon that nation at the destruction of Jerusalem. The punishment of Gehenna, says our author, was never threatened upon the Gentiles.

So the whole of Mr. B.'s labors comes precisely to this;—If the destruction of Jerusalem does not mean endless misery, that doctrine is not taught in the scriptures! He has written more than 400 pages to show that there can be no punishment in a future state, because Jerusalem was captured in this!—It is not my design to misrepresent Mr. B.'s work; but really I do not see why this is not the natural result of his reason-

ing. He has undertaken to examine the foundation on which future endless misery rests. He confines himself to four words—Sheol, Hades, Tartarus, and Gehenna. Now these four words embrace the *whole* foundation of future eternal misery, or they do not. If they do not, then Mr. B. has failed in the very onset. His plan, though original, is defective ; and all his arguments, resting on this base, fail of their object ; for all he has written may be true, and still future, or even endless misery may be a verity.—But if these words do embrace the *whole* foundation of future eternal misery, then future, eternal misery rests entirely upon the term Gehenna ; for certainly it cannot rest upon Sheol, Hades, and Tartarus, words which, according to Mr. B. do not signify misery at all. Now if eternal misery rests solely upon Gehenna, then this term embraces all the punishment ever threatened ; then the Gentiles were never threatened *with any* punishment ; for Mr. B. says, the Gentiles were never threatened with the punishment of Gehenna. And as Mr. B. applies this term to the destruction of Jerusalem, and contends that it will bear no other application, the most that can be made of his reasoning is this ;—There can be no punishment after death for any individual, because the city of Jerusalem was destroyed in this world ! Punishment cannot be endless, because that city did not stand an eternal siege ! This, I think, is the grand result of his whole Inquiry.

All that he has done (admitting what he has written to be conclusive) is, to show that future eternal misery is not taught in the words rendered *hell*, in our version. But this is very far from meeting the point in debate ; for all he has written may be true, and still endless misery may remain unshaken. Hell is not a term on which we rely to support a future retribution. It is not a term on which the *learned* rely for the support of endless misery. They frequently call endless misery by



the name, *hell*; but they do not rely upon that term, when they attempt to prove that doctrine from scripture. If they quote texts where this word occurs, still the argument is drawn from some circumstance or phrase connected with the passage, and not from the word *hell*. I am far from being a believer in endless misery, but I am free to confess that I find nothing in the Inquiry, which convinces me of its falsity.

But the very definition which Mr. B. has given of Sheol and Hades, does not exclude misery. He says again and again, that Sheol and Hades signify *the state of the dead in general*. Now does this definition of Sheol and Hades oppose a future, or even endless misery? Not in the least. We might as well contend that there will be no future happiness, because Sheol and Hades do not signify happiness, as to contend that there will be no future misery, because these words do not signify misery. To maintain that there will be no misery beyond the grave, because Sheol and Hades do not mean misery, is entirely sophistical. In this manner any proposition can be proved. Misery, for instance, could be argued out of this world. Thus—the word *earth* does not signify misery, therefore there is no misery in the earth! What should we think of a person who should undertake prove that there was no misery in the city of Boston, from the consideration that the word, *Boston*, did not mean misery?

But although Mr. B. has repeatedly said that Sheol and Hades did not mean misery, either temporary or endless, still he acknowledges that in several instances they do mean misery. Where our Savior is said to have been compassed about by the *sorrows of hell*, where David was *delivered from the lowest hell*, and where Capernaum is threatened, with being *cast down to hell*, he confesses that hell signifies misery. Now if hell signifies misery in these passages, as Mr. B. asserts, how can

he maintain that it never means misery, either temporary or endless? And if it means misery in these passages, who knows but that it does in others? It is not my design to point out the instances in which hell means misery, but only to avail myself of the concessions he has made; and these are amply sufficient to weaken his reasoning. When treating upon Gehenna, Mr. B. contends that it would be extremely improper to borrow language from a temporal scene to represent an eternal one. A great part of his reasoning, when remarking upon Gehenna, is founded upon this principle. But what is the course he has pursued in relation to Sheol and Hades? He contends that these terms signify *the place of the dead*, that is, they apply to a *future world*. But he makes use of them as figures to express suffering in this state. Now if Sheol and Hades, a place or state in a future world, can be used figuratively to express misery, it is much more natural to suppose that they express misery in a state to which they belong, than in a state to which they do not belong. But Mr. B. has pursued the opposite course, and so has contradicted what he has said elsewhere. It is perfectly proper to borrow figure from time, to represent things in eternity. For human language was designed to express our ideas of things belonging to this world, and unless we are allowed to speak of events in a future world in language which originally applied to this, we cannot speak of them at all. But there is not the same necessity of borrowing language from a future state, to represent things in this. But as the sacred penmen have done this according to Mr. B.'s own confession, it gives us good reason to believe that they have done the other also.

In his 2d chapter Mr. B. tells us on the authority of Dr. Campbell and others, that the term Gehenna is derived from the Hebrew words, *Ge* and *Hinnom*, that is, the *valley of Hinnom*, near Jerusalem. He appears to

speak of Gehenna as a *proper name*, and because the *valley of Hinnom* does not signify misery in a future state, he argues that such misery cannot exist. But does not every person know that the proper name of a place does not express the state or condition of the inhabitants relative to happiness or misery? The word *Salem*, for instance, signifies *peace*. But who ever thought of inferring from hence, that there were never any broils or contentions in the town of Salem? What should we think of a person who should assert that there never had been, and never would be any misery in the *State of Vermont*, because Vermont signifies *Green Mountain*, and not a place of misery? Will Mr. B. assert that the inhabitants of *Jerusalem* never experienced any of the horrors of war, because the word *Jerusalem* signifies, *they shall see peace*? His reasoning proves this as clearly as it proves that there will be no misery after death. But the fallacy of this reasoning must be obvious to the weakest capacity.—I think Mr. B. cannot complain of this as misrepresenting his reasoning, for he acknowledges that he has spoken of hell as a place of misery, and constantly he speaks of hell or Gehenna as the name of that place. And I believe the representation I have given above, is the impression which is given to plain unlettered readers, who in many respects are the most impartial judges.

Should any person feel disposed to disprove future eternal happiness, he might adopt Mr. B.'s plan with advantage. By tracing the word heaven to its primitive root, he would find that it did not signify future happiness, or even happiness in any state. He might pursue the course which Mr. B. has, with considerable plausibility. He might take the first of Genesis—"In the beginning God created the *heaven* and the earth," and show that *heaven* did not signify happiness, but simply the surrounding air, or the firmament. He might argue that

as this was the first time the word heaven occurred in the Bible, and as it did not mean happiness in this case, it ought not to be understood as having that meaning in any other passage, unless the writer gave special notice that he used the term in a sense different from that in Genesis. He could also quote many texts, where heaven has the same meaning as in Gen. i. 1. He might then turn to the New Testament, where he would find the word, *heaven*, for the first time in Matthew third—"The kingdom of *heaven* is at hand," in which passage heaven doubtlessly signifies the *gospel dispensation*. By examining the New Testament, he would find many passages to corroborate this signification. And if he found a few passages which did not appear to coincide with his views, the same labor which Mr. B. has bestowed upon the rich man and Lazarus would solve the difficulty. He might call it *parabolic* happiness, and not literal enjoyment. In this manner he could prove that there will be no future happiness, as clearly as Mr. B. has proved that there will be no future misery. Whoever will read the Inquiry with attention, will, I think, be convinced that the representation of the work given above, is substantially correct.

Mr. B. has also published an Inquiry concerning the Devil and Satan, and the duration of the terms, Olim, Aion, and Aionios. This work, like the former, exhibits a good temper of mind, and no small degree of patient investigation. It, however, contains nothing peculiarly original, except an exposition of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and a few other passages, which we regard as vague and inconsistent. Though this work contains much truth, we believe that in many respects, he carries his principles too far, and manifests a disposition to pull down rather than to build up. But this appears to be policy adopted by all the advocates for his views.

## LETTER VI.

*Scripture proof of a Future Retribution.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

In this letter I propose to call your attention to some scriptures which, to my understanding, teach the doctrine of a future retribution. I shall, however, confine myself to a few passages, as I find that I am likely to exceed my contemplated limits. The first text I shall notice, is John v. 28, 29. "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." I have quoted this passage in this place in consequence of its affinity to the passages already considered, under the head of a *future judgment*. The passage before us teaches a future judgment, and informs us of its concomitant events, viz. a *resurrection*, and a *state of punishment*. The passage before us, I think, applies to a future state, and teaches a future retribution. I am sensible, however, that you confine the passage to this world, and apply it to the destruction of Jerusalem. But against your construction, and in favor of mine, there are many weighty considerations.\*

You will readily acknowledge that the passage in question holds forth the idea of a *retribution*—a retribution which is to take place at a *specified* time or period. Now the fact, that this retribution is to take place at some *particular, specified* time, let that time be when it may, goes directly against the doctrine which limits

\* The substance of our remarks upon this passage has been published by the writer of these Letters, in the Christian Repository for Oct. 1825.

● all punishment to this world. For, if men are punished to the full desert of their crimes here in time, it is manifest that they must be punished step by step as they pass along, so that if they be taken away at any moment, they will have received all they deserve, and so be obnoxious to no further punishment. The doctrine for which you contend, therefore, forbids the idea of any *special* judgment; for it maintains that men are punished at one time, as much as at another; that they are punished daily for their sins, so that if by any accident any one should be taken away instantly at any time, the account would be squared in this state, and the subject would stand exposed to no future discipline. Now it is perfectly idle on your scheme to talk of any *special* judgment, that is, a judgment which is to take place at any *specified* time. It is totally senseless and absurd to speak of any *particular* time, as *the day of judgment*, if the judgment takes place *every* day—at one period as much as at another.

What should we think of a distinguished philosopher, who should pretend that he had some important fact to make known to mankind, and then should gravely assert, that on a certain given day, the tide would ebb and flow at New-York? Since the ebbing and flowing of the tide is what takes place regularly and constantly, we should conclude, that this learned man was trifling with our understanding, or else he was disordered in his intellect. Just so must our Savior appear, on your interpretation of the passage. On your scheme we must suppose that Jesus Christ called our attention to a subject, as though it were something of transcendent importance, and then gravely told us, that great power was given him by the Father, that he might be enabled at a certain future period to accomplish, what? Why, that which has taken place daily in all ages of the world, without any assistance on his part!! But shall we attribute such consummate trifling to him who was incapable

of deceit—"who spake as never man spake?" Far be the thought. It is so evident that a special judgment is taught in this passage, that you are free to acknowledge it, though this acknowledgment is fatal to your system.

But you inform us that our Savior was speaking of a spiritual resurrection in the context, and has given no notice of any change of the subject.\*—That Jesus was speaking of a spiritual resurrection in the context, is readily admitted, but *that he did give intimation of a change of the subject*, we shall attempt to show. And it is worthy of special remark here, that you yourself apply the 28th and 29th verses to an event totally distinct, and entirely different from any thing taught in the context. And certainly you would not apply the different parts of this chapter to different events, in direct opposition to your own statement, unless such an application was taught in the discourse. But to proceed;—In the 25th verse Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear, shall live." This is undoubtedly a moral or spiritual resurrection. But a spiritual resurrection admits of no special judgment to follow the resurrection. It only teaches us, that those who are dead in sin, are raised to newness of life or spiritual enjoyment. After speaking of a spiritual resurrection in verse 25th, Jesus says in verses 26th and 27th, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute *judgment also*, because he is the Son of man." Here our Savior not only speaks of his ability to impart that life of which he had spoken in verse 25th, but speaks of his ability to execute *judgment also*. Thus we learn that he did change the subject of discourse. From that of a spiritual

\* 2d Reply to Merritt, p. 32.

resurrection, which precludes the idea of a retribution, he changes to that of a literal one, connected with a retribution or judgment. This change of the subject is plainly taught by his speaking of executing judgment in *contradistinction* from raising men to spiritual life. "Hath given him power to execute *judgment also*." Unless there is a change of the subject, the emphatic word, *also*, has no meaning. It is perfectly evident from the discourse itself, that there is a change in the subject.

Knowing that he had introduced something in addition to what he had been treating of, the divine Teacher says, "Marvel not at this;" that is, though I have introduced something new, do not be surprised. And then, to confirm and illustrate what he had hinted relative to executing judgment, he adds the passage in question. "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves, shall hear his voice, and come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Now it is perfectly evident, from the manner of introducing the 28th and 29th verses, that they allude to a subject entirely different from what is taught in verse 25th.

By comparing the 25th verse with the 28th and 29th, we shall discover at once that they treat of different events. 1. In the 25th verse, it is said, "the hour is coming, and *now is*;" in the 28th, "the hour is *coming*." Here then is a striking difference; one is represented not only future, but *present also*; the other is represented as *exclusively future*. 2. It is said in verse 25th, "the *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God;" in the 28th, "*all* that are in their *graves* shall hear his voice." Here again is a striking dissimilarity. The former asserts that the *dead* shall hear. The term *dead* is used very frequently in the New Testament to repre-



sent those in a state of condemnation—"dead in trespasses and sins." But the word *grave* is not used by any New Testament writer in that sense. Though you put a figurative meaning upon the term *graves*, in this passage, you are not able to produce a single instance in the whole New Testament, where the word is used in that sense; but you are under the necessity of repairing to one of the highly figurative visions of Ezekiel. But this is an unfair mode of interpreting any writer. It is, in fact, not explaining his meaning by his own uniform use of the term, but by the single use of it by another writer, in another age of the world, and that too in a connexion, where it is acknowledged, that the language is furthest possible from being literal. Who would feel justified in explaining the meaning of a term, in a writer of our own age and nation, by the use of this term in one connexion only in a single writer in the days of Greece or Rome; especially when it is acknowledged, that this ancient writer, in this instance, used the term in a sense entirely different from all his cotemporaries, and different from his own accustomed method of using it? But this would be no more unjust than to explain the word *grave* in St. John's gospel, by the sense in which an ancient prophet once used it. Now it appears to me to be much more proper to explain the meaning of the word *grave* by St. John's own use of it, than to go to the Old Testament to ascertain its meaning. But for the sake of the case, we will go to the Old Testament. The word *grave* occurs very frequently in the Jewish scriptures. But it is not even pretended that it is used to express the state of the *spiritually dead*, except by *one* writer, in *one connexion only*. If the Old Testament, therefore, is to decide the question, it is much more rational to explain it by the *general* use of the word by various writers, than to explain it by the use of one writer only, and that in an excepted case.

Now if we let St. John be his own expositor, a privilege which all other writers claim, the matter will be decided at once. The term *μνημα*, here rendered *grave*, occurs at least *sixteen* times in John's gospel. *Four* times it is applied to the grave of Lazarus, where it will be admitted by all, that the term signifies the *place of the literally dead*. *Eleven* times it is applied to the grave or sepulchre of Christ, where its meaning will not be disputed. Now as this term is used *fifteen* times in John's gospel to signify the *literal grave*, it is natural and just to conclude, that it has this meaning in the remaining instance ; especially as this is the sense in which the other New Testament writers uniformly use the term, and this sense best agrees with the passage itself.

3. In the 25th verse Jesus says, "They that hear, or *listen*," as Wakefield renders it, "shall live." This plainly implies that all do not listen or regard the voice. By the *dead's hearing the voice of the Son of God*, mentioned in the preceding part of the verse, nothing more is meant, as you will acknowledge, than that the gospel is preached to those who are dead in sin. Now both scripture and observation teach us, that many who hear the preaching of the gospel, do not listen, or regard its requirements. Thus the clause, "they who listen, shall live," implies that a part only of those who enjoyed the preaching of the gospel, obeyed its requirements at that time, or were altered by what they heard. But not so in the 28th and 29th verses. There we are told that *all shall hear*, and *come forth*. Here again the difference is such as to lead us to the conclusion, that the two passages cannot apply to the same event.

4. The 25th verse says, "all that hear shall live ;" that is, all that come forth, shall enjoy happiness. But this is far from being the case in the 29th verse. There we are told, that "some shall come forth to life, and *some to condemnation*." Thus we see that these passa-

ges are far from teaching the same thing, and of course cannot apply to the same event. The latter passage is introduced as something in addition to the former, and different from it; and by comparing the passages together, we find that they teach doctrines essentially distinct and dissimilar. The 25th verse represents the event spoken of as *present*; the 28th and 29th, as *future*: the former speaks of the *dead in sin*; the latter, of those in their *literal graves*: in the one case, a *part only* obey the voice; in the other, they all yield obedience to the summons: in that, all who obey come forth to enjoyment; in this, a part come forth to damnation, there, a retribution is precluded; but here, it is clearly taught. And what passages, I ask, can be more dissimilar? Nothing but the bias of system, I should think, could lead any person to interpret these passages of the same event.

Further; the 28th and 29th verses cannot be explained in a spiritual sense without involving the greatest absurdity. A resurrection implies a change; it is taking men from one situation, and placing them in another, different from the former. But if the passage be interpreted of a spiritual resurrection, it makes confusion of the passage. It would then amount simply to this;—Those who are dead in sin experience a great change, even a *resurrection*; they are raised to that degree, that they are *sunk much deeper than before*. Or they are brought from a state of moral death, to what? a state of moral life? No—they are brought from moral death to moral death! that is, they have experienced no resurrection at all! Or in other words, their change is so great, that they are in the same situation after they have experienced this change, as they were before. But does not every person see that this entirely destroys the consistency of the text? Besides, the passage is introduced with a mark of attention—“Marvel not at this!”

But if Jesus meant nothing more in the 28th and 29th verses, than he had taught in the 25th, he must have trifled with a solemn subject. Suppose a speaker, after having dwelt a considerable time upon a subject, should call our attention as though some new subject of importance was about to be introduced, and then should repeat what he had already stated several times before. We should think the man was partially deranged, or that he was sporting with his audience. But God forbid that we should ascribe such conduct to a Teacher sent from heaven.

You apply this passage to the destruction of Jerusalem, and represent it as expressing the situation of the Jews as a nation.\* By this application you admit that our Savior did change the subject of discourse. Why then do you contend that the 28th and 29th verses must be interpreted in the same manner as the 25th; and at the same time interpret them essentially different? But I would ask, on what authority do you apply this passage to the Jews as a nation, and confine it to the destruction of Jerusalem? There is nothing in the context which justifies this. The Jews as a nation, or the destruction of Jerusalem are not spoken of, nor even alluded to in the passage or its connexion. Not one word in the whole context can be found which authorizes such a construction of the text. Neither will the passage bear a construction so limited. The language is *universal*. "*All that are in their graves.*" There is no more propriety in applying this to a part of mankind, than there is in applying those passages which speak of Christ's *dying for all*, to a part of mankind; which application you would be the last to admit. Besides, we have already seen that the passage speaks of those in their *literal graves*; and certainly you will not pretend that all the *literally* dead were raised to life in the apostolic age. If we should admit that this resurrection

\* Lect. pp. 376, 377.

was spiritual, the passage then could not bear your construction. All men in a state of moral death did not hear the voice of the Son of God, that is, the gospel, at that period. It cannot be said with a shadow of propriety, or even of truth, that the gospel was preached to the whole human family, at the destruction of Jerusalem.

We will go still farther, and for argument's sake, will admit that the resurrection was spiritual, and that the passage applied to the destruction of Jerusalem. Now I ask, in what sense did the Jews hear the voice of the Son of God at that period? They certainly did not hear the preaching of the gospel; for those Christians who were at Jerusalem were commanded by our Savior himself to leave the city, and flee into the mountains. Neither is it probable that one tenth part of them ever did hear the gospel. And if it should be granted that the gospel was preached at the destruction of Jerusalem, this would not answer the description of the passage. The text undoubtedly means something; it expresses something which does not *ordinarily take place*. Now suppose that the gospel was preached at that period; this is nothing different from what takes place at other times, and so does not answer the description given in the passage. They must hear the voice of Christ in some extraordinary manner in order to come up to the sense of the text. But in what sense did they hear this voice at the destruction of Jerusalem? Jesus made no personal appearing at that time. They could not hear the voice of the Son of God at all, unless the besieging army be considered that voice. But who will admit an absurdity like this? If the besiegers be the voice of Christ, then every besieged city hears that voice; then the Jews did not hear that voice in the apostolic age, any more than they did when Nebuchadnezzar razed their city to the ground, and carried them captive to Babylon. But away with absurdities like these.—But in what sense

were the Jews *raised* at the destruction of their city? Were they made better or more virtuous? No—those who were sinful, remained so. Now this resurrection, to mean any thing, must mean that their state was altered either for the better or the worse. They were not made better, for the passage says, they come forth to condemnation. It follows then that they were made more unhappy, and plunged deeper in misery. This, one would think, appears more like *sinking* than *raising* them. Can a single instance be produced in which the sacred writers, or any others whatever, express the destruction of Jerusalem, or any other city, by the term, *resurrection*? We should call that writer a maniac, who should call the capture of a city, a *resurrection*.

Again; you apply this passage to the destruction of Jerusalem, at which time you maintain that a special judgment took place. Now the Jews were rewarded according to their deeds, during the ages which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, or they were not. If they were not, then many of them went out of the world without an equitable retribution; then many will be punished in a future world, so the system for which you contend must be false. But if the Jews, and consequently all others, were rewarded in this world according to their deeds in the ages which preceded and followed the destruction of their city, as they must have been to avoid a future punishment, then there is not the least propriety in applying this passage to the apostolic age. The passage, on your construction, teaches nothing but a retribution, and might as well apply to the landing of our forefathers at Plymouth, as to the destruction of Jerusalem. For on your scheme, men are rewarded according to their deeds at one period, as much as at another. At the destruction of Jerusalem men received no more than they justly merited, and according to your views, they have received that in all ages; conse-

quently the passage in question applies to the destruction of Jerusalem, no more than to the year of jubilee under the law.

The method you adopt to prove that the passage in John applies to the destruction of Jerusalem, is to consider it parallel to the one in the 12th of Daniel, which is supposed to apply to that event.\* In the first place, it is not absolutely certain that the passage in Daniel alludes to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. But if this should be granted, it furnishes no proof that the passage in John alludes to the same event. There is no evidence at all that our Savior borrowed his language from Daniel. In fact, the phraseology of our Savior in the passage before us, is entirely different from that used by Daniel. There is scarcely one term used in common by them. Now how can it be pretended that our Savior borrowed his language from Daniel, when his language is entirely different from that used by the prophet? But if it could be proved that Christ borrowed his language from the passage in Daniel, it would not follow that he alluded to the same event that Daniel did. Whoever has examined the subject with attention, will be sensible, that even when the writers of the New Testament quote the precise language of the Old Testament, they frequently accommodate it to the subject of which they are treating, when this subject is entirely different from that to which this language originally applied. And as this is true of quotations, it surely cannot be pretended that two writers are describing the same event, because their language is somewhat similar. All the accounts we have of the invisible world, are given in language borrowed from this. But what rational man ever thought that God possessed a corporeal body, from the fact that words are applied to him, which were originally applied, and are constantly applied to

\* Reply to Merritt, p. 16. Lectures, &c.

the human system? John, in describing the saints in heaven, says, they were *clothed with white robes, with palms in their hands*. But who would understand this in a sense strictly literal, because this language was borrowed from literal objects?

You cannot be so ignorant of the scriptures as not to know that the sacred writers, when speaking upon one subject, frequently borrow language, which originally applied to another. And will you rest your exposition of the passage before us, upon a principle which you will admit to fail in very many cases? Give me the latitude which you take to apply John v. 28, 29, to the destruction of Jerusalem, and I will engage to prove any thing, or rather to disprove every thing, and leave you in scepticism. There is not a passage in the New Testament which you apply to a future state, but that may be explained away in the same manner. Take for example 1 Corinthians, 15th chapter, where a resurrection is taught. You, who apply the passage in John to the destruction of Jerusalem, contend that the 24th of Matthew applies to the same event. Now there is a much greater similarity between the phraseology of certain passages in the 24th of Matthew and the 15th of Corinthians, than there is between the passage in John and the one in Daniel. Examples. In Matthew we read repeatedly of *Christ's coming*; in Corinthians, of "those who are *Christ's* at his *coming*." Matthew says, "then shall the *end come*;" Paul says, "then *cometh the end*." Matthew speaks "of the sound of the trumpet;" Paul says "the trumpet shall sound." Now this proves that the apostle in the 15th of Corinthians was speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, as clearly as you can prove that the passage in John applies to that event. In fact the proof is much more to the point; for we are not under the necessity of calling in the visions of Ezekiel to our aid, and travelling through the visions of Daniel, but



can compare the passages directly together. Not only the 15th of Corinthians, but every passage which you apply to a future state, can be explained away in the same manner; and did it not look too much like trifling with the subject, we would apply your method of interpretation to every passage which is thought to apply to a future state of being, and show that they can all be made to apply to the present world, as well as the passage in John. Perhaps you will say that there is something in these passages which will not allow of their being applied to this state of being. I answer, there is something in the passage in John, which does not allow such an application, as we have already seen. I am fully persuaded, that with no more ingenuity than I possess, I can take *every passage* which you apply to a future state, and interpret them as applying to this world, and justify the interpretation by arguments of the same nature of those which you adopt to avoid a future punishment.

The exposition we have given of John v. 28, 29, is confirmed by other passages which speak of the resurrection. When Paul was accused, and brought before authority, and was permitted to speak for himself, he says in his defence, among other things, "And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the *just* and *unjust*."\* Here the apostle speaks of a resurrection of the dead. This I think you will admit, is a literal *resurrection*. And this resurrection is general. Paul not only says there shall be a resurrection of the *dead*, but he particularizes and says, "both of the *just* and *unjust*." And this he speaks of as a truth generally admitted—a truth "which they themselves also allow." Thus it appears that not only Paul, but the people generally in his day, believed in a resurrection of

\* Acts xxiv. 15.

the dead, both of the just and unjust. It cannot be pretended that Paul in this passage admitted their views for the sake of justifying himself, for he says in the passage, that he *has hope towards God in this resurrection*. From this passage we learn that there is a distinction of character among the *dead*, as well as among the living. The apostle speaks of the dead in general; he then divides them into two classes, the *just* and *unjust*. This incontrovertibly shows that all do not become holy at death. There will be a resurrection of the just and unjust, *as such*. They will retain their characters in the resurrection. The just will be raised to happiness; and the unjust to misery; or, as our Savior expresses it in the passage we have already examined, "they shall come forth unto the resurrection of damnation." The resurrection of the just and unjust, of which the apostle speaks, cannot be a spiritual resurrection; for we have already seen that a spiritual resurrection of the unjust involves a solecism; as it supposes that they are raised from moral death to moral death, which is no resurrection at all. That rewards and punishments will be administered at the resurrection, appears from the language of the divine Teacher. "For thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just,"\* These passages plainly teach us that there will be a resurrection of the just and unjust, *as such*; that one will be rewarded, and the other punished; and so they go directly to confirm the exposition we have given of John. v. 28, 29. From what has been offered upon this passage, I think it obviously appears that there will be a general resurrection of the dead at some future period, and that a state of rewards and punishments will follow that event. I am aware that you will urge the 15th of 1st Corinthians in opposition to these views; but that scripture will be attended to hereafter.

\* Luke xiv. 14.

The next passage which claims our attention is Matt. x. 28. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The parallel passage is Luke xii. 4, 5, which we will transcribe. "And I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." These passages both relate to the same discourse of our Lord, and may with propriety be examined together, as they mutually throw light upon each other. They teach us that men's power is limited by death. They may kill the body, but "after that have no more that they can do." But not so with God. After he hath killed the body, he can cast us into hell, that is, he can punish us in a future state. But you say, "I understand that the divine Teacher, in the instance mentioned in these passages, alluded to the *power* of God, and not to what it was the *will* of God to do."\* This then is your interpretation of the passage;—God is *able* to cast into hell after he hath killed the body, but it does not follow that he will do it. By examining the context, we find that Christ sent out his disciples to preach and perform miracles. He apprised them of the danger they would have to encounter. And to encourage them in a faithful discharge of their duty to God, he utters the words of the passage before us. The disciples were placed in a very critical situation. If they were faithful to God, they drew upon themselves the severest persecution. But if, to avoid this persecution, they shrunk from their duty, they drew upon themselves the judgments of God. In this trying dilemma their Master addresses them—  
 "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to

\* Univ. Mag. Vol. III. p. 134.

admit that God is able to do this ; it is totally absurd on your system to admit that God possesses this ability. But perhaps you will say that the passage would not teach a future punishment, if it should be granted that God does perform that which he is here said to be able. I acknowledge that you have said, "if a man was destroyed, both soul and body, it appears to me that this man would not exist."\* But it is a little surprising that you should make an observation like this, since you are decidedly opposed to the doctrine of *annihilation*.† You must know that *destruction* is not only threatened, but is actually inflicted upon some human beings.‡ Now in the passages here alluded to, and in many others, the wicked, or some part of them, are said to be *destroyed*. And do you understand by this, that they are annihilated? No—you contend that they will all be made eternally happy. Why then do you intimate that *destroy* in the passage in question, means extinction of being? Nothing but a prepossession in favor of a system, would have induced you to make the above remark—a remark which you must either recal, or renounce the "restitution of all things." You cannot be ignorant that the word *destroy*, frequently signifies nothing more than *trouble*, *pain*, or *misery*. So it is perfectly evident that if the passage before us has its fulfilment, a future retribution will take place.

On our exposition of the passage, the motive to fear God rather than man, is clear and forcible. We have already seen the purpose for which this passage was spoken. Jesus was then about to send out his disciples, and he told them that they would be persecuted even to death, for his name's sake. Thus by being faithful in the cause of the gospel, they were in danger of losing

\* Univ. Mag. Vol. III. p. 134. † U. Mag. Vol. VI. p. 6.

‡ 2 Pet. ii. 1. Matt. vii. 13, Jer. xvii. 18. Hos. iv. 6. xiii. 9, Ps. xcii. 7. xc. 3.

their lives; but if they were unfaithful, they would meet the disapprobation of God. Now in this critical situation, what course must they pursue? Must they fear men, or God? Our Savior tells them, that they must fear the latter. But why fear God rather than man? For this good reason;—men can put you to death, but there their power ceases. The injury they inflict cannot extend beyond the grave. But not so with God. He can not only take your life, but he can subject you to suffering in a future state. Therefore it becomes you to fear God rather than man. Since it is a fact that men would take their lives on supposition that they were faithful in the cause of God, it follows of course, that God would subject them to a future state of discipline, if they were unfaithful. Thus on the exposition we have given, the motive to fear God is strong and clear. But on your exposition there is no motive at all. You make Christ tell his followers to fear God rather than men; and then to enforce this duty by reasoning which shows that we ought to fear men as much as we fear God. If God does not inflict a punishment after death, the motive to fear men is equally as great as to fear God. Men can not only put us to death, but they can, as Jesus expresses it in the context, *persecute and scourge*, before they inflict death; that is, they can put us to death in the most lingering, painful manner. And on your system, God can do no more. Hence you have no motive at all to fear God rather than man. But on our exposition, as we have seen, the motive is powerful, and the reasoning cogent.

Since our Savior would not reason inconclusively, nor use deceit, it is manifest that there is a probability, that God will inflict a punishment upon those who are disobedient; and that this punishment will extend beyond the grave. It also appears from the context that the motive which our Savior presented was a real motive.

For both Matthew and Luke, in the immediate connexion, say that Christ *will reject those who reject him*. Matthew says, verses 32d and 33d, "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. *But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*" This passage makes it perfectly evident that the punishment which God is able to inflict after he hath destroyed the body, will be inflicted. We have already seen the situation in which the disciples were placed. They must either fear God or man. Jesus says to them in the 28th verse, "But rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Here the fear of God is enforced by the consideration that God is able to punish in a future state. In verse 29th, he tells us that God takes cognizance of all things, even the fall of a sparrow; in verse 30th, that the hairs on our heads are all numbered, and in verse 31st, that we are of more value than many sparrows. Then follows the passage we have already quoted. "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess," &c. Thus we see that the 32d and 33d verses, which declare that Christ will confess those, who confess him; and *will deny those, who deny him*, are inferred from the preceding verses. In verse 28th, Jesus says, that God is *able* to cast into hell, *after the body is destroyed*, and in verses 29th, 30th, and 31st, he tells us, that God's knowledge and power extend to every event. He then infers from these verses, that those who confess him, will be confessed, but those who deny him, will be denied by God. That the 32d and 33d verses are an inference from the 28th, 29th, 30th, and 31st, appears evident from their being introduced with, *therefore*. "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me," &c. The argument of our *Savior* is perspicuous and forcible. It is briefly this;—

Since God is able to cast into hell, after he hath killed the body, and takes cognizance of all events; it follows that those who deny me, will be denied by God. This, then, settles the question entirely. It shows in the clearest manner, that that punishment which God, in verse 28th, is said to be *able* to inflict, will be inflicted upon the disobedient. Those who deny Christ, will be denied by him. It is unnecessary to inquire whether any do deny Christ, because it will be readily admitted that he is denied by thousands. It will be of no avail to say here, that the passage does not say that Christ will deny them in a future state; for St. Luke, in the parallel passage, says expressly, that God has power to cast into hell, *after the body is destroyed*; which clearly shows that the punishment is beyond the grave.

The 32d and 33d verses furnish us with an argument in another point of view. It is frequently said by the advocates of your system, that the passage, "Fear not them which kill the body," &c. was addressed *only to his disciples*. But in the 32d and 33d verses, this sentiment or principle is made *general*. "*Whosoever* shall confess me." Thus we see that this passage is made of general application; it embraces not only the disciples, but men universally. Whoever has read the New Testament with attention, must be sensible that in very many cases, what is addressed to the disciples applies to others as well as to them. Who ever thought that those excellent instructions, contained in Christ's *Sermon on the mount*, did not apply to all men, from the fact that it was addressed to Christ's disciples? But if the scriptures apply to those only to whom they were at first addressed, we may close our Bibles immediately, for nothing in them applies to us. It is strange that men, to support a system, will lay down principles which destroy Christianity itself. We have now offered all that is thought necessary to meet your exposition of

the passage. We have seen, that in order to free the divine Teacher from the charge of duplicity, we must admit that God will punish men after the death of the body; and this our Savior confirms in the immediate connexion, by saying, that those who deny him before men, shall be denied by him before his Father in heaven.

That there is great difficulty in reconciling this passage with your system, appears evident from the numerous and contradictory expositions, which have been given of the text by the abettors of your views. Mr. Kneeland gives two different interpretations of this passage. In the first place, he explains it as you do. He then becomes dissatisfied with this exposition, and in the same controversy, he adopts the following as its meaning—*Fear not men who can kill the body, but fear men who can not only kill the body, but leave it unburied after it is dead !\** I will not attempt to confute this wild exposition, but will content myself with remarking that our author must be in great distress for his favorite system, to have recourse to an exposition like this. But Mr. Balfour's imagination is too fruitful to be confined to two interpretations. In the first place, he explains the term *soul*, *expletively*, that is, *to have no signification*, and *used only to fill up the sentence*; and then the term *soul* is explained to signify *animal life*, in direct opposition to his first interpretation. At one time, *de-destroy* is explained to signify *annihilation*; at another, to signify misery at the destruction of Jerusalem. And after all, there is no certainty that this punishment will be inflicted upon any one; for it is not said that God will do it, but only that he is able.† All these various and contradictory views are given by Mr. B. and he,

\* Christ. Repository, Vol. III. pp. 53, 60, 61. Also Philadelphia Univ. Magazine.

† Balfour's Inquiry, pp. 189—214.



when treating upon this passage, adopts first one, and then another of these expositions, as best answers his purpose. Now this multiplicity of interpretations, which have been given of the text by the defenders of your system, is proof positive that the passage does not naturally correspond with your views. What else could have induced Messrs. Kneeland and Balfour to offer such various and discordant constructions?

Before dismissing this subject, I have a few remarks to offer upon Mr. B.'s labors upon this text. In his Inquiry and Reply, he has about 50 pages to reconcile this passage with his views—a circumstance which plainly shows that he found no small share of difficulty. In the first place, Mr. B. tells us that the term *soul*, is used expletively in Matthew. In proof of this, he says that Luke does not mention any thing but the body; and if Matthew by the word *soul*, meant the *immortal part of man*, there is a great deficiency in Luke's language in relating this discourse of our Lord's.\* Now if we look at these passages, I think we shall find no deficiency in Luke's language, on supposition that Matthew meant the immortal part of man by the term *soul*. Matthew says, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Now let us look at Luke's language. "I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." We have now both passages before us, and on examination, we shall find that they teach one and the same thing.

In the first place, Matthew says, "fear not them that kill the *body*, but are not able to kill the *soul*." Luke

\* Inq. p. 190.

says, "be not afraid of them that kill the *body*, and *after that have no more that they can do.*" Now it appears that Luke recognizes the same distinction between *soul* and *body*, as is expressed by Matthew. "Fear not them that kill the *body.*" Why did Luke mention the *body*, if he meant to convey the idea, that every thing pertaining to man died with the body? By speaking of the body, he implies that man possesses something besides the body; something which survives it, and is not dependent upon it for existence. Suppose I should say of Gen. Warren, who fell in our struggle for independence, that his *head* was killed at Charlestown. Would not every person consider this as very singular language? They would. Mr. B. himself would say, that it was absurd, as it implied that the rest of his body was not killed. For he would say, if his whole body was killed, why mention the *head* in particular? Every person at all acquainted with language, would say that it was absurd to say of the General, or of any other person, that his *head* was killed, since the head and body always die together. Just so absurd must St. Luke's language appear in speaking of the death of the *body*, unless he meant to recognize something which outlives the body, and which Matthew expresses by the term *soul*. Thus we see that the language of Luke cannot be understood without involving an absurdity, unless we admit that he recognizes the distinction between soul and body, which is expressed by Matthew. By the single term *body*, therefore, used as it is by Luke, all is virtually taught, which is expressed by the other evangelist.

But further—Luke says, "Fear not them that kill the body, and *after that have no more that they can do.*" It is necessary to keep in mind that Christ in this passage was speaking of what was calculated to excite fear. He says, as Luke records it, that men can kill the body, and there their power ceases; "after that they have no

more that they can do." No more that they can do to what? Not to the body; for they can do what they please to that. But whatever is done to the dead body does not injure the deceased, and so is no motive to excite fear. Here we see that there is no propriety in the sentence, *and after that have no more that they can do*, unless there is something which survives the body, and is beyond the grasp of human beings. Thus we see that Luke's language cannot be understood consistently, unless we admit that he means the same by the sentence, "and after that [death] have no more that they can do," as Matthew means by the sentence, "but cannot kill the soul." In fact, the expressions have one and the same meaning, on all fair rules of interpretation. But Luke does not stop here. He says, "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell." Cast what into hell after he hath killed the body? Not the body alone; for casting the dead body into hell or Gehenna, would have no weight in exciting fear; and we have already seen that this fact was mentioned to move Christ's followers to fear God. But if it was the body alone that God could cast into Gehenna after death, as some pretend, there would be no motive at all to fear God rather than man. For men can cast the dead body into hell or Gehenna as well as God. The meaning of this part of the passage is obvious. God, after he hath killed the body, hath power to cast the soul, or after the resurrection, is able to cast both soul and body into hell. Now in the passage, as recorded by Luke, there is a complete antithesis. We are commanded not to fear men, but to fear God. The former is supported by the consideration, that men can kill the body only, "and after that they have no more that they can do;" they cannot afflict the soul after death;—the latter is supported by the consideration, that the divine Being is not so limited; he, "after

he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell;" that is, he can do what men cannot; he can afflict the soul after death, which is beyond the power of human beings. This is the sentiment taught by Luke, and this is precisely the idea conveyed by Matthew. Thus we see that there is no deficiency in the language of Luke, on supposition that the word *soul* in Matthew means the *immortal part of man*. Their language is a little different, but the same idea is taught by both the evangelists.

All that Mr. B. has said about the term *soul's* being used expletively, and about the deficiency of Luke's language, amounts to nothing. This in fact he confesses himself; for after laboring some time to prove that the term *soul* is used *expletively*, or is a mere *Hebrew idiom*, he abandons this ground as untenable, and then tells us that the term *soul* signifies *natural* or *animal life*. Now it ought to be remarked here, that when Mr. B. gives up his first position, that the word *soul* is a *Hebraism*, or is used *expletively*, and explains it to signify *animal life*, he admits a distinction made by Matthew between *soul* and *body*, as much as those do, who explain the term *soul* to mean the immortal part of man. He considers the word *soul* to mean animal life, and thus admits that the terms *soul* and *body*, have different significations, and convey different ideas. Now as Mr. B. makes the terms *soul* and *body* in Matthew, convey different ideas, as much as those who explain the *soul* to mean the immortal part of man, if there is any deficiency in Luke's language on supposition that the *soul* means the immortal spirit, there is the same deficiency on supposition that the word *soul* means animal life. But does Mr. B. admit that there is any deficiency in Luke's language? Does he acknowledge that it falls short in any particular, in conveying the same idea which Matthew has expressed? No; he tells us that both passages convey precisely the same idea. He has even inserted a *note* at

the end of his book, to show that he does not allow "that Matthew has expressed more than was included in the mode of expression used by Luke."\* Thus does Mr. B. himself, though in direct opposition to his own statement, labor to show that what we have been pleading for, is correct; he contends with us, that nothing more is expressed by Matthew than is implied by Luke.

Now if what Mr. B. has said concerning the term *soul's* being a *Hebraism*, be *true*, then all he has said concerning its signifying *animal life*, must be *false*; and if what he has said in favor of the *latter* be *true*, then what he has said in favor of the *former* must be *false*. This is self-evident. For if the term *soul* be used exclusively, and have no meaning, as he first contends, then surely he cannot with any consistency pretend, that it signifies *animal life*. But although these interpretations are in direct opposition to each other, Mr. B. uses first one, and then the other, as best answers his purpose. He appears to set out with this principle, viz. *that a future retribution shall be put down*; and to this end he is disposed to sacrifice every thing, even his own consistency.

Mr. B. tells us that the Greek term, *ψυχη*, rendered *soul*, in this passage, and its corresponding Hebrew word, *נפש*, signify *animal life*. But how does he prove this? Why, he makes learned quotations from Whitby and others, to show that these words frequently signify mere *animal life*. But to what does this amount? Because the Greek term, *ψυχη*, frequently signifies *animal life*, does it thence follow that it has *always* this signification? Because it signifies *animal life* in passages where the sense requires this meaning, shall we conclude that it must have this meaning in other passages, where the sense does not require, but absolutely forbids it? This is what Mr. B.'s argument requires of us.

\* See Note A. p. 443.

But where would such reasoning lead us? Mr. B. tells us that it is not *ψυχη*, soul, which is used in scripture to signify the immortal part of man, but *πνευμα*, spirit. It is *πνευμα*, and not *ψυχη*, he informs us, which the sacred writers use to express that part of man which never dies.\* But suppose we should institute the same inquiry concerning the use of *πνευμα*, as Mr. B. has done concerning the use of *ψυχη*, should we not find that this term also is frequently used to signify something different from the immortal spirit? Yes—the same Mr. B. has furnished this labor for us. He tells us elsewhere,† that the Greek word, *πνευμα*, and its corresponding Hebrew word, *רוח*, which are translated *spirit*, frequently have other significations. He has enumerated about *one hundred and sixty* instances, in which these words are rendered, *wind, east wind, whirl-wind, side, blast, air, breath, cool, large, shovel, refreshed, apace, courage, quarters, respite, enlargement, their nobles, anger, &c.* Besides, he tells us that they are used to signify the *person or individual, &c. &c. &c.*

Now if we should introduce Mr. B.'s argument which he applies to the use of the term, *ψυχη*, we should argue the immortal soul or spirit out of existence. We might take any passage, which is thought to teach us that man possesses an immortal spirit, and say as Mr. B. does concerning *ψυχη*, that the term, *πνευμα* and its corresponding Hebrew term, signify wind in scores of passages, therefore this passage does not prove that man possesses an immortal spirit. By reasoning in this manner, we might become Sadducees in good earnest. I cannot believe that Mr. B. intends to undermine our holy religion, but I must be permitted to say, that I do think his writings go more to support *naturalism* than Christianity. But in his Reply to Sabine, Mr. B. grows more confident than in his Inquiry. He tells us in the Reply that

\* Inq. pp. 206, 207, 208. † Evan. Repertory, and U. Mag.

the term  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ , does not in a single instance signify the immortal part of man. My limits will not permit my examining the passages in which the term  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  occurs, but I will just remark, that Mr. B. maintains that the *soul* frequently signifies the *mind*. Now what idea Mr. B. would attach to the immortal part of man, I know not. I presume however, that he would admit that if there is any part of man which survives the death of the body, it is something which is capable of thought and perception. And what is this but the mind of man? I should be obliged to Mr. B. if he would inform me what idea he would attach to the immortal part of man, different from what he would attach to his *mind*. Admit then that  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  frequently signifies the mind, as Mr. B. contends; this is admitting all that we ask; for we conceive that the mind is the very thing which outlives the body. Again, Mr. B. tells us that  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  frequently signifies the *person* or *individual*. But this is no more to his purpose than the other. This is a common figure of speech, in which a *part* is put for the *whole*. In those passages, the whole man is expressed by a term which, strictly speaking, applies only to a part. But this language is founded upon the principle, that man does possess a soul as well as a body, and that this soul is one essential part of his nature. So instead of confuting, this use of the term  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ , goes directly to establish the idea for which we contend.

But Mr. B. assures us that the word soul, ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ ) generally signifies *animal life*.\* We readily admit that this term signifies animal life in some passages, but what has this to do with Matt. x. 28? Let us for a moment look at the passage. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Let the term soul mean what it may, one thing is obvious, viz. *that it is*

\* Reply, p. 117.

*something which survives the body, and so is not dependent upon it for its existence.* But can this be said of mere animal life? By no means. *Killing the body, is killing the life.* By interpreting the term soul to signify life, the whole force and consistency of the passage are lost. On that interpretation, the sentiment of the passage is, "fear not them that kill the life, but cannot kill the life!" Mr. B. says, "this would indeed be an absurd consequence," but he contends that this is not a consequence drawn by himself.\* It is true that Mr. B. does not draw this inference, but he lays down the premises from which this inference flows, and that necessarily. He says that the word *soul*, in this passage, means animal life. Of this he is so very confident, that he thinks he can *convince every candid man* that his statement is correct.† Here then is one of the premises clearly laid down. The other is this;—killing the body is killing animal life. This is a self-evident proposition. Animal life cannot exist without the existence of the body, and the body cannot live without the existence of animal life. To say that animal life can exist without the existence of that animal body, of which it is the life, is a plain contradiction. And it is equally contradictory to say that the body can live without the life which constitutes it a living body. So it is evident, even to demonstration, that killing the body is killing the life. Now on supposition that the term soul means animal life as he contends, the conclusion is fair and logical. Thus—

The term soul signifies animal life :

Animal life cannot exist without the existence of the animal body ;

Therefore killing the body, is killing the animal life.

Hence the sentiment of the passage, on his interpretation, is, fear not those who kill the life, but cannot kill the life.

\* Reply, p. 110.

† Reply, p. 112a



This is a just consequence from Mr. B.'s exposition of the passage, and it is not in his power to avoid it. In fact, he admits it true in one sense. He says, "It is killing or destroying the life from this world." But he says, "Men cannot kill the life, so as to prevent its reanimating the body; but God can not only kill the body, but prevent its ever living again. God's power reaches to this; for he is able to destroy the life, or in other words, never raise the person to life again."\* Here Mr. B. acknowledges that killing the body is killing the life, as far as it relates to this world. But how is it with regard to the future? He says, men cannot prevent the life's reanimating the body. This is true, and it is equally true that they cannot prevent the body's being raised from the dead. Men can prevent the life's reanimating the body, as much as they can prevent the body's becoming the receptacle of the life. Their power is equally limited with regard to both. When they kill the body therefore, they kill the life at the same time, and in *precisely the same sense*. If killing the one relates to this world, killing the other relates to this world also. But Mr. B. says that men cannot kill the life, so as to prevent its living again. The same may be said of the body. The scriptures declare that God will *quicken our mortal bodies*, as well as give us life. In fact, doing one is doing the other. So there is no way for Mr. B. to avoid this conclusion, which he himself acknowledges to be absurd. He admits that killing the body is killing the life, as far as it relates to this world, and we have seen that the same is true as it relates to the future. Hence he makes our Savior say, "fear not them that kill the life, but cannot kill the life; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both life and life in hell."

But Mr. B.'s zeal to pull down a future retribution,

\* Inq. pp. 205, 206.

has involved him in another absurdity. In these passages Mr. B. says, men are "dissuaded from the *fear of man*, and the *fear of God* is strongly inculcated upon them.\*" But how is this fear inculcated? Not by what God can do in this world, for Mr. B. acknowledges that men do as much as God does in this state, to excite fear. Men can kill the body, and killing the body is killing the life, as far as it relates to the present state. Now if to fear God rather than man is *strongly inculcated*, God must do something more than to kill the body, and consequently the life, in the present world; and what this something is, Mr. B. has informed us. He says in language already cited, "God is able to destroy the life, or in other words, *never raise the person to life again.*" Here Mr. B. admits that the passage applies to a *future state*. Men, he says, cannot prevent the life's reanimating the body in a *future world*, though they can destroy both body and life in this. But God can do more; he can refrain from raising them from the dead. Now as Mr. B. will not pretend that the resurrection of the body takes place in this world, so he is compelled to admit, after all his labor to the contrary, that the fear of God is "strongly inculcated" by the consideration of what God can do in a future state. Mr. B. tells us again and again, that this passage applies to this world, and is confined to the destruction of Jerusalem. But after all this labor, he is constrained to acknowledge that the passage applies beyond the grave.

But after all Mr. B.'s labor to prove that the term soul means animal life, he appears to give it all up, and concludes upon the whole that this term is used expletively, and is a "mere Hebrew idiom." By saying this, he denies that the term soul means animal life, as has already been shown, and need not be repeated again. That Mr. B. does give up the idea, that the soul means animal life,

\* Inq. p. 189.

and finally espouse his first interpretation, that it is a Hebraism, may be seen by his closing remarks upon these passages, both in the Inquiry and in the Reply.\* Yes—before he leaves these passages, he brings up the interpretation he first gave, though this is in direct opposition to the drift of his labors upon the texts.—But Mr. B. tells us that the passage does not say that God will inflict such a punishment, but only that he is *able* to do it. This part of his interpretation corresponds with yours, and has already been examined. I will however offer one remark upon this statement of Mr. B.'s. He tells us repeatedly that this passage is parallel to Matt. xxiii. 33, and so applies to the destruction of Jerusalem. Now according to his representation, we must conclude that Jerusalem has not been taken, and never will be ; for he tells us, it is not said that God will do it, but only that he is able. As to his remarks that the terms *kill* and *destroy* may mean *annihilation*, I will only observe, that as he contends that this is not his opinion, and that annihilation does not follow on his interpretation of the passage, it does not follow on ours.

I should not have detained you so long in remarking upon Mr. B. had not his Inquiry been esteemed by many almost as an oracle, and had he confined himself to any one interpretation. From what has been offered upon this passage, I trust it is apparent that the term soul signifies the immortal spirit ; something which men cannot affect, though they kill the body ; and that God is to be feared from the consideration that he is able to destroy, that is, afflict or punish the sinner after death. We have also seen that it must have been probable that such a punishment would be inflicted, otherwise we must charge the Son of God with duplicity ; and this interpretation is confirmed by the Savior, who tells us expressly, in the immediate connexion, that those who deny him, shall be denied in return.

\* *Inq.* p. 444. Reply, p. 121.

Your attention is next requested while we attend to Luke xvi. 19 to 31 inclusive. "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

As detecting error is frequently necessary to the discovery of truth, we will, in the first place, examine your interpretation of the passage, and in order thereto, we will notice several observations which have been made

by different advocates for your exposition. We are sometimes told, that unless we admit this to be a parable, we must understand the whole literally.—But every person who is but superficially acquainted with language, must know that in every literal history, there is some figurative language. Inattention to this plain principle has led to the remarks we are now considering. Mr. Balfour and Mr. Pickering inform us, that on the common interpretation, we must admit that the rich man was punished in a future state, for no other crime than *being rich*.\* And Mr. P. adds that the beggar went to heaven, only because he was *poor*, and *full of sores*. I shall direct my remarks on this subject entirely to Mr. P. partly because they are not so pertinent on Mr. B.'s exposition of the passage, and partly because we shall examine Mr. B.'s exposition hereafter. Now did it not once occur to Mr. P. that, if there was any difficulty on this subject, he was involved in it, as much as others? On his interpretation he admits, that the rich man experienced *deep mental affliction*. And I will here submit the question to him, was this for the *crime* of *being rich*? The beggar, he admits, entered into the joys of the gospel. And I ask again, was this solely for being *poor and full of sores*? Mr. P. must see that the absurdity he would charge upon others, is equally chargeable upon himself. If God can punish men in this world, who have never committed any crimes, he can do the same in the future. The principle is the same in both cases, and the latter does not impeach the character of God any more than the former.

But does Mr. P. believe that the rich man was guilty of no crime? He does not. Though he says, "no crime is specified against him," he contends that the rich man represents the Jewish nation, which *for her sins*, was

\* Balfour's Reply, p. 78, and Pickering's Sermon, vs. Carpenter, p. 23, &c.

rejected by God. He admits that this parable is parallel to the 25th of Matthew, where the Jews are represented, as he contends, as being rejected for *crimes*, there enumerated; and also parallel to the parable of the *wheat and tares*, where he admits that the tares are the *children of the devil in character*. He contends that the rich man received his punishment in the apostolic age, in which Christ came to reward men *according to their deeds*. In this manner he admits the rich man to be a sinner, though he is not charged with any crime in the passage in question. Now if Mr. P. will grant others the same liberty which he takes himself, they can easily free themselves from the absurdity which he would fix upon them. Relative to the point before us, I will observe, that as sin and misery are always united, the existence of the one, supposes the being of the other. Any passage of scripture which informs us that any individual is a sinner, virtually tells us, that he is, or will be punished, though the passage itself may express nothing relative to punishment. And so on the other hand, any passage which informs us, that an individual is punished, virtually informs us, that he has committed sin, though nothing of this is expressed in the passage. This is a principle which I am confident Mr. P. will admit, and this entirely does away the force of his statement on which we have been remarking.

Mr. P. indulges himself a little farther, and gives us to understand, that if his representation of the passage be rejected, we must consider it all literal, and so admit the *Christian's heaven* is the *bosom of a man*, &c. Now if Mr. P. designed this as a specimen of wit, or a mere play upon words, we grant that it possesses some merit; but if he designed it as an argument of *any weight*, we must say that he has utterly failed of his object. Suppose we should apply the same rules of interpretation to Mr. P.'s own language. Take for instance, not where

he is speaking in parables, but where he is describing visible objects. Describing the face of the earth, he says, "The luxuriant vales, *clad* with a *vernal carpet*; the numerous streamlets, pouring their *willing tribute* into the *bosom* of the deep," &c.\* Here we might adopt Mr. P.'s principle of interpretation, and say that this must all be understood as a parable, otherwise we must absurdly suppose that the valleys *wear literal garments made of carpeting*, and that the streams are *literal beings*, possessed of *free will*, and from *choice* pay a *literal tribute* to the ocean, which receives it in her *bosom*! What would Mr. P. say to such remarks upon his language? He would undoubtedly say that they showed more of the wit than of the logician; and this is precisely the character of his remarks now before us.

Before attending to your exposition of the text, I wish to offer a few words upon the nature of parables, and the principle of expounding them. A parable is an invented story told in a literal form. They are designed to teach some important truth, and to enforce it more powerfully upon the mind. And though parables are only fictions, they are always founded upon some principle which is true. In this point of light, there is no difference between a parable and a literal history. Those who agree with you in opinion, are very fond of calling the scripture now before us, a parable. But what of that? A parable is as true as any literal history. It matters not whether this scripture be a parable, or a literal history; the doctrine it teaches, is precisely the same on either construction. An able writer justly observes, that if it be a literal history, it teaches what *has taken place*; and if it be a parable, it teaches what *may take place*.† So far as it regards the doctrine taught, it is of no consequence whether it be a parable or not.

\* Sermon on Luke xix. 38, p. 5.

† See Dr. A. Clark, on the passage.

In order to a right understanding of the parables of our Lord, it is necessary to observe the purpose for which they were introduced. The parables are generally introduced for one purpose only, and ought to be interpreted as bearing upon that point in particular. Nothing is farther from the design of the parables of the New Testament, than to have them interpreted in such a manner as to make every sentence and word teach some important doctrine—some separate truth. For instance; in the parable of the *lost sheep*, there is no particular idea conveyed by the number, *an hundred*; any other number would have answered the same purpose. Accordingly we find in the very next parable, spoken for the very same purpose, that our Savior uses the number *ten*. "Or, what woman having *ten* pieces of silver." So in the parable of the *prodigal son*, where the father said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring upon his hand, and shoes upon his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it;"—we are not to suppose that the *robe*, *ring*, *shoes*, and *calf* teach any separate truths, or are designed to represent any distinct points of doctrine. The whole sentence quoted only goes to show that the father received him joyfully, and treated him kindly. Any person who attempts to interpret the parables in such a manner, as to make every expression teach some distinct truth, may show his ingenuity, but he does it at the expense of the more valuable properties of his mind. There are always some leading points in every parable, and to these all the ornamental parts ought to be kept in subserviency.

We will now give a brief view of your interpretation of the passage, and compare its several parts together, and the whole with the scriptures. Your views appear to be these—1. The rich man represents the high priest under the law. The *death* of the rich man is the close of the law dispensation; and his burial represents the



high priest "closed up in his earthly character and nature." The rich man's *torment* after his death, represents the state of misery into which the Jews went after the destruction of their city and temple. And the great gulf signifies the purpose of God. 2. The beggar represents the Gentiles, and his death, the conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity. Abraham's bosom represents the faith of Abraham, or the gospel.\*

These appear to be the leading features of your interpretation. I have not mentioned every particular contained in your Notes, because they have no direct bearing upon our subject. We will now consider the particulars we have transcribed.—1. You say the rich man represents the high priest under the law. But what evidence do you produce in proof of this? Nothing but the following ;—"The rich man's clothing was *purple* and *fine linen*, a garment which Moses was commanded to put upon Aaron, the first high priest." But is it certain that one person is designed to represent another, because two articles of their clothing happen to be of the same kind or color? Would any jury convict a prisoner arraigned for murder, when they had no evidence that he was the murderer, only that one article of his clothing was of the same general kind, and the other of the same general color, as that worn by the perpetrator of the horrid act ; especially when this clothing was in general use among certain classes of men? They would not ; they would consider it no evidence at all. Now this is a just representation of the argument before us. The high priest was not the only person who wore *purple* and *fine linen*. We are told on sacred authority, that Mordecai wore not only *purple* and *fine linen*, but also *gold* and *blue*—two other ingredients in the dress of Aaron.\* Here is a much greater resemblance between Mordecai and the high priest, than there is be-

\* *Notes on the Parables*, pp. 248—277. † Est. viii. 15.

tween the rich man and the high priest. Their garments corresponded, not in two particulars only, but in four. But no person was ever led by this coincidence to conclude that Mordecai was the high priest, or a representation of him. Now we have just as much proof that the rich man represented Mordecai, as you have that he represented the high priest. The woman seen in John's vision, was clothed in *purple*.\* It is also said of Babylon, that she "was clothed in *fine linen* and *purple*, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls."† Here is a description which would correspond vastly better with the garments of the high priest, than that given of the rich man in the passage before us. But who ever considered Babylon a figure of the high priest? Once more; the prophet represents the city of Tyre as clothed in *purple* and *fine linen*.‡ The city is here put for the people; hence it is evident that *purple* and *fine linen* was a common dress among them. Now what authority have you to say that the rich man, clothed in *purple* and *fine linen*, alluded to the high priest under the law, when this dress was generally worn by the wealthy? There is not, in fact, one particle of proof that our Savior alluded to the high priest. This part of your interpretation, therefore, is entirely destitute of support.

Next comes the *death* of the rich man. You say, "By the death of the rich man, I understand the close of that dispensation which gave him all the preeminence, which he enjoyed above the beggar under the law." Here you virtually abandon your first representation, and introduce another. The rich man you first made to represent the high priest; but the death of the rich man you make represent not the death of the high priest, but the close, or death of the law dispensation! But what evidence do you give of the truth of this? Nothing but your bare

\* Rev. xvii. 4.

† Rev. xviii. 16.

‡ Ezek. xxii. 7.

assertion, and as such I leave it. But the most marvellous of all, is that of his *burial*. What does the burial of the rich man represent? You answer, "the high priest closed up in his earthly character and nature." *Closed up in his earthly character and nature!* What idea you mean to convey by this phrase, I am at a loss to determine. But as you elsewhere explain the "earthly nature," to signify the body, I conclude that this must be your meaning. The high priest closed up in his body! And what person is not closed up in his body? But does this constitute a burial? A person must be inclined to mysticism, to give countenance to such a wild interpretation. As to your statement, that the *great gulf* signifies the purpose of God,—since you offer nothing in support of it, I shall leave it without remark.

2. You say, "the Gentiles are signified by the beggar." But here again you bring no proof. The Gentiles are not even mentioned in the passage or context. Again you say, "By the death of the beggar I understand the conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity." This is a singular death indeed. And what makes the absurdity still greater, you explain the two deaths differently; the one is the close of the law dispensation, the other is the conversion of the Gentiles to the gospel. But it has the same support as the rest of your interpretation.

Upon your explanation of this scripture, I cannot help remarking, that it is far-fetched and unnatural; and is too mysterious for common people, for whom as well as others, the scriptures are designed. Your interpretation is so far from the literal language of the passage, that I presume not one in a thousand would ever have hit upon it. And I cannot believe that God would give us a revelation, which would deceive so large a portion of his creatures. You apply this passage in your Notes to the day of Pentecost.\* This you say *was undoubtedly* the

\* Notes on the Parables, pp. 154, 155, 170.

time in which the passage had its fulfilment. But as confident as you were at the time you published your "Notes on the Parables," you are now equally confident that you were then mistaken in the application of this, and many other passages. All those passages which you then applied to the day of Pentecost, you now apply to the "destruction of Jerusalem." The destruction of Jerusalem appears to be the key, with you and those of your sentiment, by which to unlock almost the whole Bible. Take a person who never saw the New Testament, and was totally ignorant of the doctrines it taught, and let him read what you, and those of your sentiment, have published within a few years, and he would be led to conclude, that the *destruction of Jerusalem* was the *sole object* embraced in the New Testament. *Here*, he would conclude, was the *grand centre*, where every denunciation of wrath met; and upon the poor Jews every threatening in the New Testament was inflicted. He would also be led to believe that the dispensation of rewards and punishments, began and ended with the siege of that devoted city. This is the impression which your writings are calculated to make.

We will now compare the different parts of your interpretation together. The rich man, who died, and went to a place of torment, you say, represents the high priest under the law. And from many things contained in your illustration, it seems that you put the high priest for the *whole Jewish nation*, which did not embrace the gospel. Your words are these;—"The miserable state of moral darkness and death into which the order of high priests under the law, and *those of the house of Israel, who adhered to those blind guides*, were cast, will be shown, as is represented *under the similitude of a rich man, his death, and his circumstances after*, as stated in the last paragraph of this chapter."\* By this

\* Parables, p. 253.

quotation it appears that the rich man, on your interpretation, represents not only the high priest, but also that part of the Jewish nation, which rejected the gospel. That this is your meaning, is further evident from what you say on pages 261, 262. You say, "Jeremiah describes the wickedness of the priests, prophets, and *people*, as follows." You then quote a passage which treats of the wickedness of the *people*, together with the priests; you then add, "Here is the rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen—on whom our Savior pronounced the greater damnation." Here you admit that the rich man represented the *people*, as well as the priests. You say, the Savior pronounced the greater damnation upon the rich man; but you tell us that this greater damnation was threatened upon the Jews, or "Jewish church," as you call it in the connexion. That this is no misrepresentation of your views, is evident from what you say elsewhere.\* "By the rich man the high priest might be particularly intended, as a representative of the *Jews in general*."

From these passages it appears that by the high priest, you mean all the Jews who rejected the gospel. Now let us look at the consistency of your interpretation. You have already declared that the high priest, and all the rebellious Jews are represented by the rich man. This rich man dies, and goes to a place of torment. This you say represents the state of darkness into which the rebellious Jews were cast at the close of their dispensation. But does this statement compare with the language of the passage? No; for when the rich man and consequently all the Jews, were in hell, they had brethren without, who were *five times* as numerous as themselves! Your explanation, therefore, involves the grossest absurdity. It supposes that *all* were in hell, and at the same time, that *five sixths* of them were out.

\* Sermon on the passage.

But perhaps you will say that this is a misrepresentation of your views; for you have said in your Notes, "By the rich man's five brethren is meant that part of the house of Israel, which rejected the Savior." I readily admit that you have made this statement in your Notes. But this is only contradicting the other part of your explanation. This contradiction is not only once stated, but it seems to be a *labored contradiction*. In the 7th section of your Notes, you contend that "the *Jews* who rejected the Savior," were in hell with the rich man, and there confined by the *purpose* of God, which is represented by the *great gulf*. You further say in this section, "By those who are in Abraham's bosom, desiring to go to the *rich man*, I understand the desire of the Gentile believers of going to the *apostate Jews* with the gospel which they reject." Here you expressly say, that desiring to go to the rich man, is desiring to go to the *apostate Jews*. By this you admit that the apostate Jews were represented by the rich man, and of course were in hell. This is clearly taught in the 7th section.

But in the 8th section you maintain the contrary, that these apostate Jews were not in hell. You tell us that they were the *five brethren* for whom the rich man prayed, that they *might not come to that place of torment*. Thus we see that your interpretation is at war with itself. What you say in one section, you contradict in another. Here you say that the *rebellious Jews are all in hell*; and there, that the *greater part* of them are *out of hell*! Here is a plain and labored contradiction, and it is out of your power to reconcile the different parts of your explanation. Explain it either way, and the same contradiction exists, and equal difficulties present themselves. If you say the Jews were *all in hell*, you not only contradict your own positive statement, but you involve the absurdity, that when *all* are in hell, *five sixths* of them are *out*! If you say that the high priest

only was in hell, and the rebellious Jews were the five brethren who were out of hell, you not only contradict what you have before stated, but you contradict plain matters of fact. This interpretation supposes that the high priest was in hell, long before the rest of the Jewish nation. But this is contrary to facts. For history teaches us that the high priest and the Jewish people fell into the same state of trouble, at one and the same time ; and in fact, this is the representation which you yourself generally give of the subject.

But your exposition is contrary to fact in another point of view. You make the high priest pray that the Gentiles may be sent to his brethren, the Jews, with the gospel, and that the Jews may embrace it. But nothing can be farther from the truth. The Jewish authority crucified the Savior, and persecuted the apostles, and have ever entertained a deadly hostility to the gospel, and to the Gentiles ; and to say that the high priest earnestly desired that God would send the Gentiles to the Jews with the gospel, is not only to speak without authority, but in direct opposition to matters of fact. As on your own interpretation, the rich man represents the whole Jewish nation who rejected Christ, and as facts constrain us to say that the people and high priest were all involved in one common ruin at the same time ; it follows on your interpretation, that the whole Jewish nation are desirous of having the Gentiles come to them with the gospel. But does fact accord with this representation ? You yourself will not pretend it.—Thus we see that your interpretation is assumed without one particle of proof ; that it is absurd and contradictory in itself ; and is in direct opposition to acknowledged facts.

I will now give what I conceive to be the true meaning of the passage. The parables of our Lord were frequently spoken to expose the corruption of his enemies. In the 13th verse of this chapter, our Savior says to his

followers, "No man can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other : ye cannot serve God and mammon." Here the divine Teacher reproved those who trusted in riches. The word *mammon* signifies *riches*, or *the god of riches*.\* So when our Lord said, "ye cannot serve God and mammon," he virtually said, that those who trusted in riches, could not be his true and faithful followers. This was a cutting reproof to the Pharisees, who were rich, and took pride in costly apparel. This rebuke the Pharisees sensibly felt ; for the evangelist says, verses 14th and 15th, "And the Pharisees also, who were *covetous*, heard all these things, and they derided him. And he said unto them, ye are they which justify yourselves before men ; but God knoweth your hearts ; for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God." By this passage we learn the character of those Pharisees to whom our Lord addressed himself ; *they were "covetous ;"* they placed their affections upon the wealth and grandeur of this world ; and consequently they were wounded, and derided him, when he told them, that they could not serve the true God, and the god of wealth. In reply to their derision, Jesus told them that God knew their hearts, and judged very different from men. And then to inform them what the judgment of God would be, and to show them their own characters, and the vanity of that wealth and grandeur in which they

\* The learned Mr. Farmer tells us that Mammon was the Pagan god of wealth. Referring to the text, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," he says, "I acknowledge that *Mammon* may signify indifferently, either *riches* or the *god of riches*, just as *Ceres* denotes *corn*, or the *goddess of corn* ; but *Mammon* being used here in opposition to the true God, there must be a reference to this false god ; and he is put for those *riches* over which he is thought to preside."

See Farmer's Essay on the Demoniacs of the New Testament, p. 199.



trusted, Jesus related the account of the rich man and Lazarus, which we need not transcribe.

In the rich man, our Savior represented the character of these rich and haughty Pharisees, and in the beggar, the character of many of the poor, whom they despised. And then to illustrate and confirm what he had already stated, viz. *that God knew their hearts, and regarded that as an abomination, which men esteemed honorable*, he informed them that the rich man died, and went to a place of misery, while the poor beggar entered into a state of happiness after death. It is not my design to illustrate every part of this parable, but only to attend to that part which bears upon the point at issue. And I regard this passage as teaching a future retribution. The death here spoken of, I conceive to be *temporal death*. This is the most natural and easy construction. It is that which most readily presents itself in reading this passage. Several things appear in the passage itself, which show the death spoken of to be literal. 1. It is said that the rich man died, and in *hell*, he was in torment. The term, *δδης*, here rendered *hell*, is defined by all critics of note, to signify, *the place or state of the literally dead; or place of departed spirits*. It corresponds with the Hebrew word, *למנוח*, in signification. These terms occur *seventy-five* times in the scriptures; and it is not pretended by any writer that I have ever seen, that those terms are ever used as applying to this state of existence, if we except two or three disputed texts. From this circumstance, it is natural to conclude that the term, *δδης*, in this passage signifies the place of the *literally dead*. 2. The situation of the rich man and Lazarus, when the former was in misery, and the latter in happiness, is contrasted with their *life time*. "Thou in thy *life-time* receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." Here we learn that the rich man ex-

perienced this misery after his *life-time* had closed, that is, after he had closed his temporal existence. 3. The rich man desired that one might be sent to his brethren from the *dead*, that is, from the state in which Lazarus was at that time. But Abraham says in reply, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. Thus we learn that the death here mentioned is literal; it is a death which introduces a person into *hades*, the place of the *temporally dead*; it is a death which closes their *life-time* here on earth; it is a death from which men literally arise.

The passage then teaches a retribution beyond this world. Yes—after this life is closed, and men pass into *hades*, the place of the literally dead, then some will be tormented. And as I before observed, it matters not whether this portion of scripture be understood as a *parable*, or a piece of *literal history*. The doctrine it teaches is the same in both cases. If it be a real history, it informs us that a certain rich man, like the wealthy and self-righteous Pharisees in character, died and entered into a state of punishment, and so gives us reason to believe that this will be their fate. And if it be a parable, it teaches us what will take place; that these Pharisees will experience misery after their *life-time* is ended, and they are gone to the regions of the dead.

Before we dismiss this passage, we will notice the interpretation which Mr. Balfour gives of this portion of scripture. In the first place Mr. B. insinuates, that if the rich man is a *supposed person*, the torment must be a *parabolic torment*!\* It is really a matter of astonishment, that a gentleman of Mr. B.'s parts, should be so far biassed by system as to offer such a remark. *Parabolic torment*! What possible idea can any person attach to such an expression? Torment must be real, or

\* Inq. p. 45.

it is no torment at all. If misery arises from imaginary objects, the misery is as real and literal, as though it arose from any other source. And to speak of *figurative*, or *parabolic torment*, is to use words without any signification.

But let us see what Mr. B. says further upon this subject. "If," says he, "people will interpret a part of this parable literally, to suit their own religious opinions, we insist that they go through with a literal interpretation of the whole of it. If it is maintained that hades was to this man a place of torment, they must allow that literal fire was the cause of it. They must also admit, that his body was tormented in hades. It must also be granted, that while tormented in the flames of hades, he could see, and hear, and hold conversation with Abraham, &c. But in these, and other things, the literal sense is abandoned, and the part only which speaks of his torment, is literally interpreted. But we have a right to ask why this is done. Who gave any man the privilege to cull out a circumstance from this parable, and consider it a literal fact, and view all the other parts as mere fiction, to fill up the body of the parable? Why fix upon the torment rather than other things in this parable, and give it a literal construction? The reason of this I think is obvious. This part of the parable, so interpreted, does very well to support the popular idea, that the wicked go to hell at death, and are tormented in this place. But every candid man must allow that this is a very strange and arbitrary mode of interpreting parables; yea, any part of the Bible. Give me leave thus to interpret the Bible, and I pledge myself to prove almost any thing from it."\*

In this passage Mr. B. manifests great disapprobation of those who interpret a part of this scripture literally, and a part figuratively. He pronounces this method of

\* Inq. pp. 46, 47.

interpreting scripture, *strange and arbitrary*, suggests that it is done only to support a preconceived opinion, and pledges himself to prove almost any thing by such a method of interpretation. But what is the method he has adopted relative to the interpretation of this scripture? Why, he considers the 31st verse—"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead," to teach the whole doctrine of the passage.\* Yes—after disapproving of others for interpreting a part literally, and a part otherwise, he proceeds within two pages to practise the same himself. To practise the *same*, did I say? He goes vastly beyond them all; he interprets a portion of scripture consisting of twelve verses, in such a manner that eleven of these verses mean nothing at all! One verse only, according to Mr. B. contains all the sentiment of the passage, the other eleven being mere ciphers! Thus in direct opposition to reason, common sense, and to the rules of interpretation, which he himself has laid down, Mr. B. considers one verse only as being true, and throws the other eleven entirely away! This violation of all just rules of interpretation, this gross inconsistency inclines us to believe of him, what he ascribes to others, viz. *that his reason has run mad.*†

Mr. B. tells us that our Savior related the account of the rich man, only for the sake of saying, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." But of this there is not one particle of proof. Besides, could not our Savior utter the sentiment of the 31st verse, without giving a preamble of eleven verses—a preamble not bearing at all upon the point, but teaching a doctrine diametrically opposite to truth? If Jesus instructed his followers in this manner, he hardly deserves the

\* *Inq.* p. 49.

† *Inq.* p. 49.

appellation of "*the light of the world.*" Mr. B.'s exposition of this passage is arbitrary in the extreme. I will here ask in his own language already cited, "Why fix upon the 31st verse rather than others in the parable, and give it a literal interpretation?" This question is happily answered by himself. "The reason of this I think is obvious. This part of the parable, so interpreted, does very well to support the popular idea, that there will be no misery after death. But every candid man must allow that this is a very strange and arbitrary mode of interpreting parables; yea, any part of the Bible. Give me leave thus to interpret the Bible, and I pledge myself to prove almost any thing from it."

But after all, Mr. B.'s interpretation of the passage favors the doctrine of a future retribution. He admits that the language of the passage teaches a punishment beyond death: This he admits by saying that Christ did not give this as his own sentiment, but spoke in accommodation to opinions of those who believed in a retribution beyond death.\* Since it is acknowledged that the language of the passage teaches a future retribution, it follows that this sentiment is the truth, unless we admit that Jesus intended to confirm the Jews in their errors, which would be totally unworthy of any instructor, especially of an Instructor sent from heaven.

Another passage to our purpose, is 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water."—

In remarking upon this portion of scripture, we will

\* Inq. pp. 49, 51, 52.

adopt your own language upon the same passage, which of course cannot be objectionable to you.\* "As long as men are disposed to *learn the scriptures how to talk, before they are willing to be taught by them*, the scriptures will be forced to speak as many different languages, as were spoken at the building of Babel, and with as much confusion. But our duty is plain, and as easy as it is plain. It is *only to let the scripture speak its own most natural language*, connecting the divine testimony, and permitting one part to explain to us what may appear enigmatical in another. It may be proper, in the first place, to carefully examine the passage in Peter with a view to see what it *says*; and in the second place it may be proper to allow that the passage says what it really means; and then to illustrate the text by the assistance of other passages. The text says, 1st, That Christ has once suffered for sins. 2d. That he, being just, suffered for the benefit of the unjust. 3d. That the benefit which was designed to result to us, as the unjust, from the sufferings of Christ, is, our being brought to God. 4th. Christ being put to death in the flesh, was his suffering for sin, and his being quickened by the Spirit, enables him to bring us to God. 5th. Christ having been put to death in the flesh, and quickened by the spirit, by which he had power to bring sinners to God, *he went and preached to the spirits in prison*. 6. *These spirits in prison, to whom Christ preached, were disobedient when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah*. 7th. The preaching to those spirits in prison, *was performed by CHRIST*, after he was put to death in the flesh, and quickened by the Spirit. The foregoing seven particulars are as *plainly* expressed in this text, as we could reasonably expect they might be in so few words, nor does it appear *that there are any words wanting* to carry those ideas with plainness to the mind. In this subject,

\* Gospel Visitant, Vol. I. pp. 220, 221, &c.

there is not the *least ambiguity*, nor is there any other difficulty than that it is as plain and direct a contradiction of the commonly received opinion, as can possibly be stated. It may be proper by way of indulgence, to ask which appears most warrantable, either to allow this subject to stand exactly as the scriptures above quoted, state it, or to contradict those scriptures without any authority from scripture for so doing!"

Here you interpret the passage to signify, that *Christ after his death, went and preached the gospel to the antediluvians who were then in prison*. This interpretation you say, is so *clearly expressed*, that *no words are wanting* to carry it with plainness to the mind. To advance any other interpretation, is, in your opinion, to deviate from the *most natural language of scripture*; nay, it is *contradicting the scriptures*, and *learning the scriptures how to talk*, rather than being taught by them. But notwithstanding you speak so positively on this subject, and feel so fully satisfied with this interpretation, we find you on another occasion, giving an exposition entirely different. Before noticing that interpretation, I will just observe, that a gentleman of your discernment would not have expressed himself with so much confidence, as you have done in the interpretation already stated, had not the passage been exceedingly clear. You must therefore acknowledge, that you were hasty and inconsiderate in giving your first interpretation with so much confidence, or that you were unauthorized in deviating from it.

Your second exposition of the passage is expressed in these words—"The particular subject to which the apostle alluded, when he spake of Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison, in consequence of being put to death in the flesh, and being quickened by the spirit, is thought to be this, viz. *he went and preached to the Gentiles who were dead in trespasses and sins, and of a character simi-*

lar to those abominable people who were destroyed by the flood.”\* It would appear by this exposition, to use your own language in your first piece, that instead of being *willing to be taught by the scriptures*, you were disposed to *learn the scriptures how to talk*; for this interpretation contradicts the apostle in almost every particular. Let us for a moment compare your interpretation of the passage, with the passage itself. The apostle says that *Christ* preached to the spirits in prison; but you say, it was the *apostles* who preached. Peter says, that the preaching was to the *spirits in prison*; but you say it was to *men in the flesh*. Peter tells us that the disobedience was in the *days of Noah*; but you contradict this, and say it was in the *days of the apostles*. Peter informs us that the preaching was to those *who were disobedient* in the days of Noah; but you expressly contradict this, and say it was not to them, but to people who lived more than two thousand years after the flood! Thus it will be seen that your exposition of the passage expressly contradicts the language of the apostle in almost every particular. Search the whole field of theological controversy, and no instance can be found of a more glaring violation of all just rules of interpretation, and express contradiction of the language of a passage, than the exposition now before us exhibits. And if St. Peter could not express the sentiment, that *the apostles preached to the Gentiles*, in any plainer language than to say, that “Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing,” I shall despair of ever learning his meaning.

Every person who pays any attention to the language of the passage, must learn this sentiment, that Christ, after his crucifixion, went and preached to the spirits of

\* Gospel Visitant, Vol. III. p. 200.



those who were disobedient in Noah's day ; and no one, I am persuaded, would ever have thought of any other interpretation, were it not to favor a preconceived opinion. And the interpretation we have given of the passage, is confirmed by what the apostle says in the next chapter. "For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are *dead*, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." Chap. iv. verse 6. Here it is asserted that the gospel was preached to the *dead*. Though you assert that the term *dead*, is used figuratively, to denote the *dead in sin*, still I think it is obvious from the passage and context, that it signifies the literally dead. The dead here are placed in opposition to the *quick*. The apostle says in the preceding verse, that Christ will judge "the *quick* and the *dead*." The *quick*, signifies those who are literally alive. Thus we find that the resurrection of Christ to literal life is in the passage in question, expressed by saying, he was *quickened*. You say yourself, "I understand that by being *quickened* by the spirit, is meant his resurrection."\* Now if to be *quickened*, signifies to be raised to *life*, then the *quick* must signify those who are *literally alive*, in opposition to those who are *literally dead*. Thus we see that by the *quick* and *dead*, is meant the living and the dead literally. And in the very next verse the apostle says, the gospel was preached to the *dead*. Now according to all just rules of interpretation, we ought to understand the word *dead*, in the 6th verse, in the same sense in which it is used in the context ; which is to denote the temporally dead.

And this interpretation is confirmed by the passage itself. "For this cause was the gospel preached *also* to the *dead*." The term *also* denotes something in addition. But there is no propriety in saying that the gos-

\* Gos. Visitant, Vol. III. p. 276.

pel was preached *also* to those who are *dead in sin*, because those are the characters to which the gospel is generally preached. It would be absurd to say that the gospel is preached *also* to those to whom it is always or even generally preached. But understand the term dead in the sense for which we contend, and this difficulty is entirely avoided. Again; it is obvious that the word dead is to be understood literally, from the concluding part of the passage. The apostle says that the gospel was preached also to the dead, "that they might be judged *according to men in the flesh*, but live according to God in the spirit." Here we see that the gospel was preached to the dead, that they might be judged *according to men in the flesh*. This implies that they were not in the flesh; for it would be grossly absurd to say, that the gospel was preached to men in the flesh, that they might be judged like men in the flesh. You acknowledge the force of this remark, and consequently attempt to show that the word flesh signifies the law.\* But this construction is unnatural and arbitrary. Let us look at the context with a view to learn the meaning of the term, *flesh*. Verse 1st, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the *flesh*, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the *flesh* hath ceased from sin." Here the word flesh occurs twice, once it is applied to Christ, and once to men. But what does the word flesh signify when applied to Christ? "Christ hath suffered for us in the *flesh*," says the passage. But did Christ suffer for us in the *law*? You will not pretend this. You will readily admit that Christ was put to death in this world; that he suffered while in the literal body. Thus the apostle says in the parallel passage, "being put to death in the flesh." Here then we learn that the word flesh was used literally as applied to Christ. But what does it mean in the other

\* *Ges. Visitant*, Vol. III. p. 302.

instance, where it is applied to men? The apostle says, "He that hath suffered *in the flesh*, hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the *flesh*, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." Will you pretend that the term *flesh* here signifies the law? Will you assert that men are slain by the power of the gospel, that they may live to God under the law of Moses? I know that you will pretend that the gospel was preached, that men might still remain under the law. Thus it clearly appears that the apostle in this chapter uses the word *flesh* literally, and hence the clause, "according to men in the flesh," signifies, according to men in this state of existence, or men who still inhabit a literal body.

Now St. Peter says, that the gospel was preached to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the *flesh*, that is, according to men here on earth. And this implies that they were not in the *flesh*, but that they had departed this life. Thus does the apostle in this chapter teach us that the gospel was preached to those who were literally dead. This then goes directly to confirm the account given in the preceding chapter of Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison. Thus does the apostle Peter teach us in the plainest manner, that Jesus Christ, after his crucifixion, went and preached to those who had long before closed their eyes on temporal objects. That Christ visited the regions of the dead, or the place of departed spirits is taught, not only in the passages we have noticed, but also in several others. St. Paul speaking of the ascension of Christ, says, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also *descended first into the lower parts of the earth*? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things."\* In the figurative language of scripture, a place of happiness is generally represented as *above*, and a place of misery as *beneath*.

\* Eph. iv. 9, 10.

Now this passage expressly declares that Christ, before he ascended into heaven, descended into the *lower parts of the earth*. This cannot be interpreted of his burial; for no person will pretend, that Christ's grave, or sepulchre, extended to the *lower parts* of the earth. It is asserted as clearly in this passage that Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth, as it is that he ascended into heaven. So in the passage in Peter, it is as clearly asserted that Christ *went to the spirits in prison*, as it is in the same chapter, that he *went into heaven*; and there is no more propriety in explaining away one than the other.

That Christ does possess all, the dead as well as the living, is told us by St. Paul.\* "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." This passage positively asserts that Christ is Lord of the dead as much as of the living. In fact, this is a leading doctrine with you. You strenuously contend, that all men are given to Christ; and they are given to him for a benevolent purpose. But where would be the benevolence in giving the dead to Christ, unless he could do them good? And how can he do them good, unless he makes them acquainted with that gospel which is the only sure means of salvation? There is no more absurdity in supposing that Christ preaches the gospel to men in another state, than there is that he will raise men from the dead in another state. The fact that Christ visited the abodes of misery in another world, is so clearly taught in the scriptures, that many Christians acknowledge it, though it is in direct opposition to their system. The Episcopal Church, both in Europe

\* Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9.

and America admit it. In their Creed, which is generally denominated the Apostles' Creed, they assert that *Christ descended into hell, or the place of departed spirits*.\* Now as the Episcopalians do not generally admit a moral change after death, this article must be in direct opposition to their general sentiment. So that nothing but a full conviction, that it was taught in the scriptures, could have induced them to admit it as an article of faith.

We will now notice several objections which you urge against the exposition we have given. One objection on which you rely is this ;—This subject is not mentioned by any of the sacred writers except St. Peter, and by him only indirectly.† In answer to this objection, we remark, 1. The objection is unfounded. It is not true that St. Peter is the only writer which alludes to this subject. We have already quoted two passages from the writings of St. Paul, and it is believed that several other texts can be produced both from the Old and New Testament. Besides, this sentiment is involved in the very nature of the gospel, especially on our understanding of it. You, Sir, believe that all men will be saved by Jesus Christ. But the sacred writers inform us that no man can be saved without repentance and faith. And we are also told on divine authority, that *faith cometh by hearing*. It is necessary therefore, that all men should hear the gospel, otherwise all cannot be saved. Now as many do not hear the gospel in this world, it follows as a necessary consequence, even on your own system, that the gospel will be made known to many in a future state. Thus the doctrine for which we contend is involved in the very nature of the gospel ; and without this sentiment, you cannot consistently maintain the “restitution of all things.”

\* See the Common Prayer Book.

† *Gos. Visitant*, Vol. III. pp. 299, 300.

2. But if we should admit that St. Peter is the only writer who has mentioned this fact, it would not invalidate the passage. One divine asseveration is entitled to our confidence. And it would be a singular kind of reasoning, to contend that what is said by Peter must be false, because the same thing is ~~not~~ mentioned by Paul. Would such evidence as this be admitted in a court of justice? No; it is an acknowledged principle that the testimony of one man is not weakened, by the other witnesses testifying that they did not see what he declares he did. Suppose A is arraigned before a civil tribunal, and B testifies that he saw A commit larceny, would any person attempt to procure his acquittal by producing witnesses who would testify that they did not see him commit the crime? No; any counsel would be ashamed to set up such a defence. But a defence like this would be quite as consistent as your argument in the case in question. For none of the sacred writers assert that they did not know that Christ preached to the spirits in prison.

We find many instances in the scriptures in which a remarkable circumstance is mentioned by one writer, and omitted by all the others. The resurrection of Lazarus is one of the most striking miracles performed by our Lord, and still it is recorded by John only; Matthew, Mark, and Luke being perfectly silent upon this subject. But will you refuse your credence to this important miracle, because it is mentioned by one writer only? You will not. Christ's resignation of his kingdom to the Father, is an important doctrine, and still is mentioned by one writer only: and he has mentioned it but once. But notwithstanding this, you believe the declaration, and make great use of that passage. In this manner you acknowledge the weakness of your objection in the case before us.—But you inform us that St. Peter, when he speaks of Christ's preaching to the spi-

rits in prison, "only throws an allusion to it, while laboring on another subject."—So much the more to our purpose; for it shows that this opinion was nothing new to those to whom his epistle was addressed. Had this doctrine been something which was not generally believed, St. Peter would in all probability have labored it more at large. But as he brought this in to illustrate and enforce another point, it teaches us most conclusively, not only that Peter himself believed this doctrine, but that it was generally admitted among the brethren in his day. Thus does your objection strengthen our interpretation, rather than otherwise.

Again, you object to the exposition we have given, in the following language:—"If the opinion disproved, be allowed, how shall we account for this particularizing the people who lived in the days of Noah?" To meet this objection, we remark,—1. If this consideration has any weight, it opposes your interpretation, as much as it does mine. For on your interpretation, you confess that the gospel was preached to a people similar to those in the days of Noah. And I can ask with as much propriety as you can, "how shall we account for this particularizing the people in the days of Noah?" 2. There is not the least difficulty as I can see in the case. Though you suggest that the passage would imply that those who lived in the days of Noah were the only ones who enjoyed this preaching, on the interpretation here contended for, I should infer the very reverse. For as God is no respecter of persons, if Christ went and preached to the antediluvians, it would be natural to conclude that he preached to others also. You interpret the text to mean that the gospel was preached to the Gentiles, whose characters were similar to those who lived in Noah's day. But does this imply that the Gentiles in relation to moral character, would compare with no other corrupt people than those who lived in the old

world? You will not pretend this. So in fact you acknowledge your objection to be frivolous. Peter in the passage in question, alluded to the old world only as an *example*, or *specimen*. As this is what you yourself must contend for, I trust you will not object to it. As the same apostle in another place,\* mentions the *old world*, together with Sodom, as examples, in regard to punishment, there is the utmost propriety in mentioning the old world as an example with regard to blessings.

Before we dismiss this subject, we will notice one objection more. After quoting Wakefield's rendering of the passage, you say, "In this translation there is nothing hinted of Christ's preaching to the spirits of those who lived in Noah's time."† Since you lay so much stress upon this translation, I will transcribe it, and mark the italic words, as I find them in his Testament, that the reader may see what he has added to the original text. "Because even Christ once suffered for sin, a righteous man, for unrighteous men, that he might bring us unto God; being killed in body, but made alive by the spirit; in which indeed he went and preached to the minds of men in prison; who were also hard to be convinced in former times; as when the patience of God continued waiting in the days of Noah, whilst the ark was a preparing." The reader is informed that all the words in the above passage which are printed in *italics*, are not found in the original, but were added by Mr. Wakefield himself, and marked by him, as you here find them, to show that they were not of divine authority. By reading this rendering of the passage, and omitting the supplied words, we have the same sense, as is conveyed in the common rendering of the text. Thus, Sir, does this translation yield you no assistance. We will also notice Wakefield's rendering the parallel passage in the next chapter. Verse 6th—"For this indeed was the

2 Peter, ii. 5, 6.

† U. Magazine, Vol. IV. p. 47.



*effect of the preaching of the gospel to the dead, that some will be punished as carnal men, but others lead a spiritual life unto God.*" This passage, as it stands, would favor your ideas of the subject. But let us see what authority he offers for this strange rendering. Whoever is acquainted with his New Testament, knows that when he deviates from the Received Text, he does not rest it upon his bare assertion, if any authority can be produced. This will be seen by his elaborate Notes, which are appended to his Testament. But let us see what authority he produces in justification of his rendering of the passages before us. We will give it in his own words. "By the *living*, I understand *Christians*; and by the *dead*, the *unconverted Gentiles*; and upon this idea have attempted to give some meaning to a passage, which is, to me, at least, otherwise unintelligible."\* Thus we see that Wakefield can offer no authority for his novel translation. He justifies it only by saying, "that otherwise the passage to him would be unintelligible." Mr. Wakefield, I believe, was a *Destructionist*, and probably a *Materialist*, and consequently he could not admit with any consistency, that the gospel was preached to men between death and the resurrection. So we can no longer wonder why the passage would be unintelligible to him, without his unauthorized variation from the common rendering. Thus we see that Wakefield in translating these passages, was governed not by the Greek text, but by his own preconceived opinion. Now, Sir, I think your scheme must be in distress to call such a translation to its aid. The above remarks are designed to apply not to Wakefield's translation in general, but only to his rendering of the passages in question.

I have now noticed all the principal objections which you urge against the interpretation here contended for,

\* See Notes on 3d and 4th of Peter, p. 156.

and I think their force is entirely obviated. Our interpretation therefore stands on a permanent basis. St. Peter expressly declares that Christ after his passion, went and preached the gospel to those who had long before departed this life. This passage then goes directly to prove a future retribution. The spirits to whom he preached were *in prison*; they were unhappy, otherwise they would not have needed this gospel. Besides, it was preached to them, "that they might be *judged* according to men in the flesh." This implies that they might be punished even after the gospel was made known to them. And further, it was preached to them, that they might repent, might "live according to God in the spirit." And this implies that they were then impenitent, and consequently miserable. This passage therefore, furnishes us with a good argument in favor of a future punishment; and it is not in your power to reconcile this scripture with your sentiment, unless you adopt the principle of Wakefield, and decidedly contradict the apostle to favor your own opinion; or to use your own language, unless you are determined "to learn the scriptures how to talk."

Before we close this Letter, we will notice several other passages which strongly imply a punishment beyond death, and so confirm the doctrine for which we plead. St. Paul says, "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace."\*—This passage asserts that those who despised the law of Moses were put to death; they suffered death *without mercy*. And he informs us that those who despise the gospel, shall receive a *sorer*

\* Heb. x. 28, 29.

*punishment.* Since *death without mercy* is the greatest punishment which can be inflicted in this state, it naturally follows that those who despise the gospel, and receive this sorer punishment, will be punished beyond death. But the advocates for your sentiment, think it absurd to admit that the gospel threatens a severer punishment than the law. In reply to a suggestion that future punishment may be taught in the gospel, though it be not found in the law, Mr. Kneeland says, "Well, surely this is a very strange thing indeed; what! does the gospel of eternal life unfold and bring to light a punishment which the law knows nothing of? and which we have not been able to find in all the Jewish records? O strange!"\*

This quotation contains much more *affected sensibility* than sound judgment. It is a principle taught by common sense, recognized in the scriptures, and ever admitted in all courts of justice, that the same act is more or less heinous in proportion to the knowledge of the offender. The greater our light and knowledge, the greater is our criminality, if we transgress. This you acknowledge, though this acknowledgment is fatal to your system. Your words are—"The scriptures abundantly prove that these who are *farthest* advanced in knowledge of divine things, are the *most guilty* if they disobey: and this is agreeable to reason and experience."† In this manner you pronounce Mr. Kneeland's suggestion unfounded, and acknowledge that the gospel inflicts a greater punishment than the law. The gospel contains more light than the law, and consequently those who abuse the gospel, and tread under foot the Son of God, will be subjected to a greater punishment than the law inflicted. It follows therefore, from the very nature of the case, that there are some who live under the light of the gospel, whose punishment will be sorer than death

\* *Kneeland's Lectures*, p. 85. † Reply to Merritt, p. 23.

without mercy, or in other words, will be punished beyond the grave. This sentiment appeared so clear to the apostle, that he submitted the question to the decision of his brethren. "Of how much sorer punishment *suppose ye*, shall they be thought worthy, who have trodden under foot the Son of God?"

Of nearly the same nature is the declaration of Christ — "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."\* To be cast into the sea with a mill-stone about one's neck, is as severe a punishment as can well be inflicted in this state; but as those who offend these little ones, are to be punished more severely, it is just to conclude that they will experience misery after the death of the body. Our Savior told the penitent thief on the cross, that he should be with him *that day* in paradise.† But if all men go immediately to happiness, the impenitent thief would be with Christ as soon as the penitent one, and so there will be no difference between those who are penitent, and those who are impenitent. When Christ said to the penitent thief "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," he virtually said that the other thief should not. This is a principle for which you contend. To establish this point you say,‡ "Let a case be proposed. There are in prison ten persons; five of which were committed for offences committed in the year 1810, the other five for offences committed in 1816. The proper authority directs an officer to go and liberate from prison, those who were disobedient in 1810. *In all respects in which this order concerns the other five, it means that they are not included.*" Now if we apply this plain principle to the case before us, it means that the other thief is not included. Thus we find that the

\* Matt. xviii. 6.

‡ Gos. Vist. Vol. III. p. 277.

† Luke xxiii. 43.

short sentence, *this day shalt thou be with me in paradise*, clearly shows that the other thief would not be admitted to immediate happiness. And what is true of the impenitent thief, is also true of many others.

Many other passages might be adduced in proof of a future retribution, but our limits will not admit of their being brought forward. In fact, we want them not. What we have offered in this Letter, is, I conceive, sufficient to establish a future retribution. And the same ingenuity which can do away the force of these passages, can disprove a future existence, or any other doctrine.

In our next we will call your attention to a future reward for the righteous.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER VII.

*Future Reward. Future misery the general opinion of mankind.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

As was proposed in my last, I will now invite your attention to the subject of a *future reward* for the righteous. A future reward is a just counterpart to a future punishment. If either of these be established, the other follows as a necessary consequence. You appear to be sensible of this, and consequently you deny a future reward for the righteous as much as a future punishment for the wicked.\* We will now inquire whether the reward of virtue does in *any case* extend beyond death. We admit that men have a reward in this world. We acknowledge that some good deeds have a full reward here on earth. But the question is, whether every act of virtue receives its full reward in this state. We have already seen that the human mind is so constituted, that all ideas take place in succession, and consequently a period is requisite for every thought and reflection. The reward of virtue arises from the reflection of having done our duty, and promoted the enjoyment of our fellow creatures. Now as the reward of the righteous consists in that happiness, which arises from the reflection of having performed some virtuous action, and as these reflections cannot exist, till after the act is performed, it follows that the reward must be subsequent to the virtuous act. And as many are taken from this world in the performance of an act of virtue, it is manifest that they must be rewarded after death, if they are rewarded at all.

\* Lectures, pp. 332, 333.

It cannot be pretended that virtue is always rewarded in the very act, for our Savior tells us that we must *take up our cross*, if we would be his disciples. This plainly shows that virtue is sometimes painful for the time being. Were not this the case, there could be no *cross* to take up. Since virtue is not always rewarded in the very act, it follows that the reward must succeed the act of virtue, and so in some cases at least, will extend beyond the grave. Thus it appears from the very nature of the case, that virtue will be rewarded in a future state. And what is so reasonable in itself, and what grows out of the very nature of things, is also taught in the oracles of God.

In the first place we will attempt to show that the Lord Jesus Christ was rewarded in a future state, for the arduous duties he performed in this. St. Paul says of Christ, "He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Here the apostle gives us a brief account of the trials and sufferings of Christ, and of the meekness and patience with which he bore them. Now what was the reward which Christ received for this work of patience, this labor of love? The apostle informs us in the very next words, "*Wherefore*," says he, or "*for this reason*," as Wakefield renders the phrase, "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Phil. ii. 7, 8, 9. Nothing can be plainer than that Christ was exalted as a reward for his benevolent deeds performed in this world. But where was Christ exalted? in this world, or the next? It is evident from the language of the passage, that this reward was granted him after death, for it was in consequence of his death, that he was exalted. In fact, every person will admit, that Christ's

exaltation was after his death. This passage, then, teaches us in the clearest manner, that Christ was rewarded in a future state, for virtuous actions performed in this. That Christ was exalted as a reward for his sufferings and death, is further taught by the same apostle. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels *for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.*" Heb. ii. 9. The same doctrine is taught in these words:—"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the *joy* that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. xii. 2. This passage not only informs us that Christ acted with a view of a reward, but it also teaches us the nature of this reward. It consisted in "sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God."

From these passages it is demonstrably evident that our divine Master "had respect to a recompense of reward," and that he was exalted in a future state, as a reward for his sufferings and death here on earth. Now if a future reward was necessary to engage the benevolent Jesus in his duty, is it not equally necessary to engage us in our duty? Since Christ is our pattern, and was rewarded after death, it is just to conclude that a future reward awaits all his faithful followers. And to this he himself bears witness. To the Laodiceans he says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. iii. 21. This passage teaches two important truths. 1. That Christ was rewarded after death for his labors on earth. "*I also overcame, and am set down in my Father's throne.*" This passage teaches us that at the time of John's vision, which was after the ascension of Christ, our Lord was *then enjoying* a reward for the labors he performed in *this world*. He was *then sitting* in his Father's throne.



This passage therefore, concurs with those before quoted, in teaching us that Christ was rewarded after death. 2. This passage also teaches us that men, who are faithful, will be rewarded in the same manner. "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Here Jesus declares that his faithful followers shall be rewarded, as he has been—shall sit in his throne after death, as he has sat in his Father's throne after death. And as Jesus sat in his Father's throne as a *reward* for his labors in time, so will the faithful disciples of Christ sit in his throne as a *reward* for their faithfulness in this state of being. Thus does the faithful and true Witness promise a future reward to all sincere Christians.

The blessed Jesus promised the same to his disciples during his personal ministry. On a certain occasion a man came to Christ, and asked him what he *should do to inherit* eternal life. Here the subject of a future reward was introduced. In reply to him, Jesus says, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." This is saying, that keeping the commandments would entitle him to a reward beyond death. But while Jesus was treating upon this subject, Peter said unto him,—“Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?” Here Peter puts the question directly to our Lord. He asks him, what reward the disciples were to expect. “And Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Matt. xix. 17, 27, 28. Here again sitting upon thrones is mentioned as a *reward* for their fidelity. We have already seen that sitting upon thrones would take place in a future world; and this sense is confirmed by the

passage now under consideration. Besides, all the principal advocates for Universal Salvation, allege this passage in proof of the future happiness of Judas. And you, Sir, revert to this passage, to show that Judas will be brought in.\* In this manner you acknowledge that the reward mentioned in this passage, will not be realized on this side the grave.

In the parallel passage, Mark x. 29, 30, Jesus says to his disciples, who declared that they had left all and followed him, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold *now in this time*, (that is, *in this life*,) houses and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and lands, with persecutions; and in the *world to come*, everlasting life." See also Luke xviii. 29, 30. It is evident from this text, that virtue is not only rewarded in this life, but in the future also. "In the *world to come*, they shall receive everlasting life," as a reward for having forsaken all, and followed Christ. There can be no doubt, but that the (*αἰών*) *world to come*, is here used to express a state beyond death, because it is placed in opposition to a state in which we may possess houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers and lands. Thus does our Savior expressly declare that men shall be rewarded in the *life to come*.

Matt. vi. 19, 20, is also in point. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures *in heaven*, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." See also Luke xii. 33. Here Jesus commands his followers to lay up treasures *in heaven*. *Heaven* is here used to express a state be-

\* Lectures, p. 319.

yond the present, because it is placed in opposition to the *earth*. Neither is there so great security in any blessing in this world, as is expressed in this text. Now as Christ has commanded us to lay up treasures in a future state of being, it follows that we can do something here to effect our happiness hereafter. To deny this, is absurdly to admit that Christ is a hard master, and requires impossibilities. Again, says the divine Teacher, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." Matt. v. 12. This passage asserts that some shall have a *great reward in heaven*, and as heaven is placed in opposition to a state, which admits of persecution, it must be beyond the confines of this world. Christ expresses the same when he says, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Luke xiv. 14. We have already seen in a preceding Letter, that the resurrection here spoken of, was literal. Hence this reward will be conferred at the resurrection of the dead. Paul to the Corinthians recognizes a future reward. "Know ye not," says he, "that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible," 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25. From this passage it will be seen that the apostle and primitive Christians ran to obtain an *incorruptible crown*. This was their *reward*, as much as the corruptible crown was the reward of those who arrived first at the goal in a literal race. And as you will not pretend that this incorruptible crown is granted in this world, this passage is clear in proof of a future reward. It is further evident that the apostle Paul looked forward to a future state for a reward, from what he has said elsewhere. "I am now ready to be offered," says he, "and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my

course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. Upon this passage, we remark, 1. Virtue cannot be fully rewarded in the act, for the apostle had performed many acts of virtue—"had finished his course," but his reward was then future. His labors were already accomplished, but his reward was yet to come. 2. The apostle fixes the time when he should receive this glorious reward. He first states that the time of his *departure* is at hand, and then says that the reward will be given him at that day, at the time of his departure. This reward will, according to the sense of the passage, be after death; and you will not pretend that a crown of immortality and glory is given in this world. 3. It appears that this glorious crown is given as a *reward*; for the apostle speaks of its being granted in consequence of his faithfulness. He also says that it will be granted to all others who love his appearing. This shows that the crown is granted as a *reward* for virtue performed in this state. 4. This passage not only teaches us that the virtuous shall receive this reward, but also that the wicked shall not. When Paul says, that this crown of righteousness will be given to ~~those~~ who love Christ's appearing, he implies that it will not be given to those who do not love his appearing.

St. Paul to Timothy teaches a future reward in the clearest manner. "Bodily exercise," says he, "profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. iv. 8. This passage is too clear to need comment. Our Savior expresses it all when he says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. ii. 10. From the passages introduced in this Letter, and these are only a specimen, it

evidently appears, that a future reward for the righteous is a doctrine of the New Testament. We have seen that Christ was exalted to his Father's throne in a *future state*, as a *reward* for his labors and suffering in *this*. We have also seen that Christ promised to reward his faithful followers in the same manner; he promised them a throne, and eternal life in the world to come—commanded them to lay up treasures in *heaven*—and said that they should be rewarded in *heaven*, and recompensed at the *resurrection of the just*. We have had the assurance of St. Paul, that the faithful looked for a crown of righteousness, and ran for an incorruptible crown—in a word, that godliness has the promise of the *life which is to come*. And finally, we have seen that the faithful and true Witness assures us, that if we are faithful unto death, he will give us a crown of life. These passages incontrovertibly prove that the reward of the righteous will be extended into a future state.

I am aware however, that you meet these passages, or several of them, by saying, that the blessings mentioned are said to be *given*, and if they are gifts, they cannot be considered as a reward. I shall not attempt to answer this objection at large, but shall content myself with two remarks. 1. The fact that they are said to be *given*, does not oppose the idea of their being a reward; for they may be given *as such*. *To give*, or *grant* a reward, is no *solecism*. 2. The blessings which the righteous enjoy in this world, are said to be gifts, and if this destroys the idea of their being a reward, then we must conclude, that they are not rewarded at all; which is repugnant to the scriptures, and your system also. So this objection can have no weight. A future reward then, is substantially proved. Now a future reward is only a counterpart of a future punishment. And all the passages which inform us that the righteous will be rewarded in another state, virtually tell us, that the wick-

ed shall not enjoy that blessing; and this is saying, that they shall be miserable. This remark will accord with your own sentiment, for you acknowledge that the scriptures every where hold forth the idea that vice will be punished as long as virtue is rewarded. Your words are these—"On the other hand, he, (meaning yourself,) does not believe that the wrongs a man may be guilty of, can justly be punished to a greater extent, than his well-doing can be rewarded. No reason is seen for extending the punishment of a man's wickedness, beyond the rewards of his righteousness. It is moreover believed that the scriptures every where justify this view of the subject."\* In this passage you admit that vice will be punished as long as virtue is rewarded. Now as we have already seen that virtue will be rewarded in a future state, we are authorized by scripture, by the nature of the case, and by your own confession, to conclude that punishment will be extended beyond death likewise.

Another argument in favor of a future retribution, is drawn from the common consent of mankind. It is a fact substantiated by history, that the doctrine of a future retribution has generally prevailed in all ages and nations. The ancient covenant people, the Jews, believed this doctrine; and all the heathen nations, of whose opinions the world has any knowledge, entertain the same views. In proof of this, I will refer to authorities mentioned in a former letter. This then, is a fact, which no person of information will deny, viz. *That a future retribution is a doctrine which has prevailed generally in all ages of the world.* It does not weaken this argument to say, that many of the heathen believed in the transmigration of souls. For this is virtually a future retribution; as it supposes that men are not sufficiently punished in the act of transgression, and so it becomes necessary, that the soul at death should pass

\* Reply to Merritt, pp. 8, 9.

into some other animal, in which it will receive a just retribution for its past iniquity. Transmigration is, in reality, a future punishment. If the soul of a sinner passes at death into any other animal, and is there punished, this punishment is as much after death, as though it were inflicted in another world. In fact, the doctrine of transmigration shows how very strongly a future retribution was rivetted into the minds of the heathen ; for rather than abandon this fundamental article, they would have recourse to almost any extravagance.

But perhaps you will say, that the heathen differed in opinion on almost every subject, had different views of a future retribution, and embraced absurdities too numerous to be mentioned. This is readily admitted, and this strengthens our argument. It shows plainly, that a retribution beyond death was so firmly believed, that how much soever they differed on other subjects, and on this very subject, they all admitted the doctrine in some form or other ; and how absurd soever they were in other respects, no one thought of relinquishing this all-important, this fundamental article. A future retribution then was the general opinion, both of the Jews and the heathen. And the question to be decided is, from whence arose this opinion ?

Now as it regards the Jews, they undoubtedly derived this doctrine from revelation. It is the opinion of many, if not of most commentators, that many revelations were made to Adam, and his immediate descendants, of which we have no account in the Pentateuch. We are told in the New Testament, that Jesus performed many things which are not recorded ;\* and there is no absurdity in supposing that Moses omitted many things also. Considering the brevity of Moses's account, it is perfectly evident that he gave only a history of some of the most

\* John xxi. 25.

important events. Considering the infancy of the world, and the lack of experimental knowledge at that time, it is highly probable that the Deity interposed frequently, and gave the first inhabitants many directions, which are not recorded. This supposition is rendered still more probable on your system, which supposes that Adam was created no more wise or perfect than other men.\*

Without admitting that the Deity gave the first inhabitants of the world some instruction more than is mentioned in the scriptures, it is extremely difficult to account for the sacrifices offered by Cain and Abel, and for many other things which are mentioned in the scriptures, and which could not have been learned from nature, especially at that early age of the world. For instance, when Cain slew his brother, he felt condemnation as much as Adam did when he violated the express command of God. But we have no account in Genesis that God had prohibited murder at that time. Now, from whence arose Cain's condemnation for slaying his brother? It must have been that God gave them a law before that time. Otherwise I do not see why he should have felt condemnation. "Where there is no law," we are told on divine authority, "there is no transgression." Since Cain felt condemnation for slaying his brother, we are led to conclude that murder had already been prohibited, though nothing of this is mentioned by Moses. Hence we are compelled to admit, that God revealed to his new-created offspring, many things which are not mentioned in the scriptures. Numerous cases might be mentioned, which lead us to the same conclusion. And it is worthy of remark, that the scriptures do not pretend that every event is recorded therein, but on the contrary they intimate that this is not the case. Hence we conclude, that many things were made known to Adam and his descendants, which are not mentioned

\* See Atonement, pp. 32—35. See also Lectures, pp. 67—80.



in the scriptures. Now as the Jews, as far back as we can have knowledge of their opinions, believed in a future retribution, it is natural to conclude, that this opinion was borrowed from divine revelation. This hypothesis will also account for their belief in a future state; for it is admitted, that we find but very little evidence of this doctrine in the Old Testament.

But, perhaps you will say, that the condemnation which Cain felt, arose from the common sentiment which God has implanted in man, *that taking life is a crime*. But this is no more to your purpose than the other position. For if the common sentiment of mankind, that *it is a crime to take life*, establishes that principle, then the common sentiment that there will be a retribution beyond death, establishes that principle also. But from whence arose the heathen opinion, that a future punishment awaited the ungodly? It is an acknowledged principle in moral as well as in natural philosophy, that every effect results from some adequate cause. And from whence arises this general belief? It is the opinion of most Christian writers, that the heathen borrowed their opinions from early revelations.\* Now if this be the case, as I think appears pretty evident, the belief of the heathen furnishes us with a good argument in favor of punishment beyond death. We are willing to admit, as was before observed, that the heathen mixed much fable with their doctrines. But this is just what might naturally be expected, on supposition that a future retribution was first borrowed from divine revelation. Who-

\* See Dr. Shuckford's *Connexions between Sacred and Profane History*, a work worthy of a critical perusal. The doctor contends that the Lord made many revelations in the first ages of the world, which are not recorded in the sacred volume, and that the heathen borrowed their doctrines from the traditions of early revelations. And before any person adopts the opposite hypothesis, he ought to be able to refute all the doctor's arguments.

See also Prideaux's *Connexions*.

ever is acquainted with the heathen doctrines and fables, and the origin of their mythology, will be sensible that the heathen built their fables upon doctrines, and not their doctrines upon their fables. The doctrine was first believed, and then some fable was built upon it. Though these fables frequently corrupted their doctrines, still it will be found that in almost every instance, their fables were not invented, till after the doctrine on which they rested, was generally believed.\* Now although their fables are numerous which relate to a future state of punishment, they are all founded upon a belief in that doctrine, which belief gave rise to these fables. Now from these brief hints, I think it will be apparent, that the heathen were indebted to early revelation for their belief in a future retribution.

But you will undoubtedly object to this. Then it devolves upon you to account for this belief. Was it borrowed from nature? I know of nothing in the appearances of nature, which even teaches a future state of being; and it would be absurd to assert that nature taught the heathen a future state of suffering, when it did not so much as teach the existence of a future state. Is it the common sentiment implanted by God in our very natures? Then this sentiment must be the truth, for we cannot suppose that God would impress a falsehood upon the whole world of mankind. You cannot consistently admit that the plain, unlettered sentiment of mankind is wrong, since you deny the doctrine of innate depravity. Does this belief arise from corrupt appetites and passions? Sinful feelings instead of favoring, remonstrate against the doctrine. When Paul reasoned of a judgment *to come*, the corrupt Felix trembled. To conclude, this general belief in a future retribution, must arise from divine revelation, be taught in nature, or be implanted in every breast by God himself.

\* On this subject also, see Shuckford's *Connexions*.

It could not be learned from nature, for nature does not even teach a future state of being. It must therefore either arise from revelation, or be the common sentiment of mankind interwoven with their very nature. In either case it affords us a good argument in favor of the doctrine for which we plead.

Another consideration which induces a belief in a future retribution, and that the ancient heathen borrowed their views from revelation, is this : The early Christian fathers all believed in a future retribution. Yes; Clemens, Origen and others, who believed in the "restitution of all things," were all firm believers in this doctrine. As these men lived in the first ages of Christianity, before the gospel became corrupted, they certainly had a better opportunity of knowing what was taught by Christ and his apostles, than men can have at the present day. Now as these early fathers agreed with the ancient heathen in opinion, it goes to show that the heathen originally received their doctrine from the same divine source. It also goes to show that Christ and his apostles taught a future retribution.

The Romish doctrine of Purgatory, which is frequently mentioned as a burlesque upon our sentiment, is actually an argument in its favor. The papal corruptions did not consist in inventing new doctrines, but in corrupting the genuine doctrines of the church. Their doctrine of *indulgences* was nothing more than an abuse of the scriptural doctrine of *remission of sins*. And so of their other abuses. They all consisted in the perversion of some scripture doctrine. The doctrine of Purgatory was only a corruption of the original doctrine of a future disciplinary punishment. The doctrine of Purgatory, therefore, goes directly to show that a future limited discipline was the original doctrine of the church. And it is no objection to our system to say that the Papists corrupted it. Who ever thought of re-

jecting the Eucharist, because the Papists held to Transubstantiation? Will you discourage *good works*, because the Catholics held to Supererogation? The fact is, every professed Christian holds some doctrines which the Church of Rome abused. But as many of your sentiment wish to ridicule our scheme by branding it with the name of *Purgatory*, we will for one moment inquire into the origin of the system in which you believe.

By perusing the pages of ecclesiastical history, we learn that the *Gnostics*, that ancient sect of heretics, who disturbed the peace of the church, agreed with you in your distinguishing doctrine. They held that the soul was an emanation from the Deity; that there was no material resurrection; that the body was a mere clog to the soul, which went to *immediate happiness*, when dislodged from the body. And this sect was founded by *Simon Magus*, that ancient enemy of the gospel.\* Your system then can boast of considerable antiquity, but it cannot be regarded, even by yourself, as a great honor to any system to be founded by a *magician*, and nursed by the *Gnostics*.

But to return: All the writers of any reputation who have defended the doctrine of Universal Salvation, have believed in a future retribution. Yes, our writers in all ages, both in Europe and America, have been agreed on this point. I speak of those now off the stage. We do not intend to attach too much consequence to this circumstance, but still we think it is entitled to some weight. Antiquity, though of itself no evidence of a doctrine, ought in all cases to entitle a doctrine to respect, till it be fairly proved to be unfounded. Antiquity also does in some instances furnish us with good evidence, by carrying us back to the times in which the thing itself originated, giving those early believers an

\* See Priestley's Church History, vol. i. pp. 46, 168, 195.

opportunity of knowing the truth. And this is the case in the instance before us. But whilst all the principal writers in all ages, who have adopted our general system, have believed in a future retribution, the doctrine of immediate happiness was scarcely heard of till within a very few years. Dr. Huntington was the first writer of any note who denied a future punishment. And since that time, which was about thirty years ago, his scheme has been generally rejected, and the doctrine which introduces all men into heaven at death, has undergone many changes, and in fact is still fluctuating. There are scarcely two persons on your side of the question, who are agreed in opinion. One founds the doctrine of immediate happiness upon *materialism*; another supposes, that sinners are first suffered to drop out of being, and then will be introduced into immediate happiness, and another saves them by an imputation of righteousness. You yourself do not appear to be at all settled in your peculiar views. At one time you save mankind by death, at another by instruction, and at another by the resurrection. This fluctuation of sentiment, this difference of opinion, among the deniers of a future retribution, plainly shows that there is great difficulty in their system. This multiplicity of sentiment verifies your declaration, that "as long as men are disposed to learn the scriptures how to talk, they will be forced to speak as many different languages as were spoken at the building of Babel, and with as much confusion."

Before dismissing this subject, I will state one notion more which has been advanced by those who deny future misery. They pretend to believe in a future retribution, but they qualify it in such a manner, that to my mind it means just nothing at all. They assert, that men will be punished after death, if they die impenitent; but they assert that this punishment is only a *negative punishment*, consisting not in any degree of misery, but

in a less degree of happiness !\* This system appears to be composed of sound rather than signification. I will not detain you by attempting a labored refutation of this novel sentiment, but will just remark : This *negative punishment*, as it is called, either renders the sinner unhappy, or it does not. If it does not, then it is no punishment at all. To talk of men's being punished, when they themselves experience no unhappiness, is a contradiction in terms. So on supposition that this punishment, as it is called, does not produce any misery, this system is no different from yours, which denies a future retribution in full. And if this negative punishment does produce misery, then this system agrees with ours, and admits of actual suffering in a future state. It is useless therefore, for the abettors of this scheme to pretend, that this is a half-way system between yours and the one for which we contend. In fact this subject admits of no medium. If a person has any settled opinion, he must either believe or disbelieve the doctrine of future suffering for the impenitent.

From what has been offered in this Letter, it will be seen that a future reward is reserved for the righteous. This consideration shows that a full retribution does not take place in this state. Every passage which teaches a future reward, teaches a future punishment also. This you acknowledge. And as a future reward is clearly proved, it follows of consequence that there will be a future punishment. We have also seen that a future retribution is the common sentiment of mankind. If this sentiment is borrowed from divine revelation, it is decisive in favor of our opinion ; and if it arises from any principle implanted in our nature, by the Deity, as it must, if it is not derived from revelation, it furnishes us with an argument nearly as forcible. We have further

\* See *Christian Telescope*, edited by Rev. D. Pickering.

seen that all the principal defenders of Universal Salvation, both in Europe and America, till within a very few years, have believed in a future retribution ; while the system for which you contend, has, from its first appearing in latter times, been in a state of almost perpetual fluctuation. This is a just statement of the prevalence and permanency of the two systems, and this is just what might naturally be expected on supposition that a future retribution is the truth of God, and its opposite the invention of man.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER VIII.

*Objections considered.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

In this Letter I propose to consider some of the principal objections which you urge against a future retribution, which have not already been answered in these Letters. Some of your arguments which I shall here notice, are perhaps more properly arguments in favor of your system, than objections against mine. They may, however, with propriety be introduced here. Your most popular objection to a future punishment is this ;—All men are to be raised immortal, and immortality cannot suffer, consequently there can be no misery after death. That you make great use of this argument, may be seen by many quotations, among which is the following.—“Whoever will pay a serious attention to the subject under consideration, and lay all prejudice aside, will soon learn that divine revelation allows *no condemnation—no sin—in an immortal state.*”\*

Your argument in relation to immortality, rests upon two positions. The premises from which your conclusion, *that there can be no condemnation after death*, is drawn, are these, viz. *that immortality cannot suffer*, and *that all men put on immortality at the moment of death*. If either of these positions be untenable, then your conclusion will fail. Do you assert that immortality cannot suffer ? You do. Thus far then, you have the confidence to state one of your premises. But do you state the other position, viz. *that all men are raised to immortality at the moment of death* ? No ; you do not.

\* Reply to Merritt, p. 34. See also Lectures, pp. 94, 369, 370. *U. Mag.* Vol. IV. p. 151.



You dare not hazard that assertion. Thus we see that you dare not state your premises, and still you appear to be very fond of exhibiting the conclusion. But you will probably say that all men will be immortal in the resurrection. This is only evading the question. The question is, do all men put on immortality at the moment of death? To say that all men become immortal, does not answer your purpose. For, if we should admit that immortality cannot suffer, men still might suffer between death and the resurrection, if the resurrection does not take place immediately at death. You frequently represent men as being saved by the resurrection. This is admitting that they may be unhappy till the resurrection. Now in order to support your doctrine of no misery after death, you must not only prove that immortality cannot suffer, but you must also prove that all men become immortal at death; or in other words, that death and the resurrection are simultaneous events.

The above is all the reply this objection merits. You cannot with any consistency at all urge this objection, until you have proved both of the positions mentioned above. Will you, who possess such strong reasoning powers, pretend to say, that the conclusion will be valid, when the premises are false? And will you still continue to urge a conclusion whose premises you dare not even state? Now, Sir, I call upon you in the most imperative manner to come forward and prove that all men are raised to immortality at death, and that immortality excludes all suffering of necessity; or else never presume to urge the objection we are considering, against a future retribution. Though this objection has been sufficiently examined, as you lay great stress upon this point, I will condescend to give it a particular examination. Let it be remembered then that this argument rests upon two positions. 1. *That all men will be raised at the moment of death to immortality.* And 2.

*That immortality cannot suffer.* These positions we will examine separately.

1. *All men are raised to immortality at the moment of death.* This proposition, which is one of the main pillars on which your argument rests, is diametrically opposite to the scriptures. When you urge this argument against our views, you virtually say that men are saved by the *resurrection*. We have already seen\* some of the absurdities attendant upon that view of the subject. When you rely upon this argument, you in fact confess that your other grounds are untenable: for if men are saved by the resurrection, they are not saved by death's stopping their career of wickedness—not by being instructed, and not by faith and repentance, those indispensable prerequisites for the enjoyment of heaven. But the question is, are all men raised to immortality at the moment of death? We have in a former Letter, pointed out some of the objections to this notion. It was then shown that the scriptures declare, that Christ was the "first born from the dead," which could not have been the case, if all men rise from the dead at the moment of death. It was also seen that David had not arisen in the days of the apostles, which shows that the resurrection is a future event.

But on the subject of the resurrection you constantly refer to the 15th of 1st Corinthians. Let us then for a moment look at that scripture, and see if it teaches us that all men are raised to immortality at death. The apostle after speaking of the resurrection of Christ, commences the subject of man's resurrection in the following language;—"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Verse 22d. Here it is asserted that all shall be made alive, but there is not the least intimation that this resurrection takes place at death. After declaring that all shall be made alive, the

\* See Letter II. to which the reader is requested to turn.

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apostle adds, "But every man in his own order ; Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." Verse 23. This verse, instead of favoring your idea, is directly opposed to it. The apostle here assures us, that Christ is the first fruits of the resurrection, that is, the first who rose to immortal life. This is also taught in verse 20th—"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." This proves that the Lord Jesus was the first who put on immortality. This sense of the passage is confirmed by verse 21st—"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." Death is said to come by Adam, because he was the first who experienced it. In like manner the resurrection is said to come by Christ, because he was the first raised from the dead to life immortal. Elsewhere the apostle says, that Christ is the *first born from the dead*. These passages clearly prove that Christ was the first, who arose from the grave to immortal life. But this cannot be true, if every man is raised at the moment of death. We must, therefore, conclude that your argument is founded upon false premises, or that the apostle was mistaken in his opinion.—But the apostle, after having stated that Christ was the first fruits of the resurrection, informs us that men shall be raised *afterwards*. "Christ the first fruits, *afterwards* they that are Christ's at his coming." This passage not only says, that Christ rose first, but it also says that men shall rise *afterwards*. No language can more clearly contradict your position.

Besides the apostle informs us, that those who are Christ's, shall be raised at his coming. Now I will submit it to you to determine whether this alludes to his *first coming*, which is already past, or to his *future coming*. But in either case, it shows that all men are not raised at the hour of death. Christ's coming must mean some *particular* time, and hence the resurrection cannot

take place at one time as much as at another. Again; the apostle says, verses 51st and 52d—"Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Paul in this connexion by *sleep* means *death*. So when he says, "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," his meaning is, we shall not all die a temporal death, but we shall all be changed from mortal to immortal beings. But when shall this take place? The passage shall answer. "At the last trump, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." This then informs us, that when the dead are raised to immortality, the saints who are alive on the earth, shall be changed to immortal beings. This truth is taught still more clearly, if possible, in 1 Thess. iv. 14, 15, 16, 17. "For if we believe that Jesus Christ died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are *alive*, and *remain unto the coming of the Lord*, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

This passage teaches us that the resurrection is to take place at *Christ's coming*, which shows that all men are to be raised at some *particular* period. It further informs us, that, when the dead are raised, those which are *alive on the earth*, shall be changed, so as to be able to ascend up into the clouds, and meet the Lord in the air. Here then we can appeal to plain matters of fact.

Has this time ever arrived? Have those who are alive on the earth ever been changed to immortal beings? Have they ever been able to ascend up and meet the Lord in the air? No man will even pretend this. Then it is evident that the resurrection is a future event; and consequently it cannot be a fact that every person is raised to immortality, at the death of the body. What has been offered is deemed more than sufficient to confute your position, that death and the resurrection are simultaneous events.

But perhaps you will say, that I might have saved myself the labor of confuting a position which you have never advanced as your opinion. But why have you not advanced this position? Your argument absolutely requires it. You are bound by all rules of reasoning to advance this position, or else abandon the inference you draw from it. It is of no use to you to say, that immortality cannot suffer. It would be of no use to prove that immortality excludes all suffering, unless you prove also, that every person is raised to immortality at death. Suppose that immortal beings are incapable of pain, how does this prove that there is no misery beyond death? If men do not put on immortality, until long after death, they may be miserable after death, and this misery may continue till the resurrection.

Now we have already seen, that the resurrection is a future event. This completely saps the foundation of your argument. You say, there can be no suffering in an immortal state. We admit it, and what follows? Not that there is no suffering after death; for as the resurrection is yet future, men may have suffered for hundreds or even thousands of years already, since their death, and their suffering may continue hundreds of years to come, before they put on immortality. Now if you were able to prove, that there could be no suffering in an immortal state, it would yield you no assistance.

They may suffer in an intermediate state, if they do not after the resurrection. Though destroying one of your premises overthrows your conclusion as completely, as if both of your premises were destroyed, still we shall not rest satisfied, till we have shown them both to be false. Having seen that your first position is void of foundation, let us now inquire into the truth of your other position, viz. *That immortal beings cannot experience suffering*. You frequently assert, that immortality cannot suffer. But we shall be better enabled to judge of the correctness of this assertion, when we shall have considered the subject maturely.

In the first place, this declaration comes from you with a very ill grace. For you are in the habit, when pressed with any difficulty relative to a future retribution, of saying, that *we have no knowledge of a future state*. Attempting to expose a future reward for virtue you say, "Why should we believe that divine wisdom, with an intention to engage us in the service of virtue, should place its reward in a future state of existence, in a world *we know nothing of, from which no traveller ever returned*." Again, in the same connexion you say, "But all this must be carried on in a *secret place*, out of sight of all the living; and *none to report it to us, only those who know nothing about it*."\* Again you say, "As amazed as any one may be at my ignorance of a future state, I have no pride in pretending to know that of which I am *totally ignorant*. After all that has been said by our doctors of divinity on the subject of a future state, reason will acknowledge that they have *no more knowledge concerning its particulars than an infant child*."† Once more you say, what man's constitution in a future state will be, "I humbly conceive no living man *knows or can know*."‡ In these passages you assert,

\* Lectures, pp. 299, 300.

† U. Mag. vol. iii. p. 131.

‡ Ibid. p. 133.

that you *know* NOTHING of a future state, but are TOTAL-  
LY *ignorant* of it. Now it is not a little surprising that  
a person who is *so completely, so totally ignorant* of a  
future state, should be so *intimately* acquainted with  
immortality, as to know, that it necessarily excludes all  
suffering. When your system requires it, you *know*  
*nothing at all* about a future world ! But no sooner is  
the case altered so as to require more knowledge, than  
your former ignorance is entirely forgotten, and all at  
once you are so well acquainted with a future world,  
and the texture of immortality, that you *know* that im-  
mortal beings can experience no suffering ! But where  
do you obtain your knowledge, that immortality cannot  
suffer ? No where. You say yourself, " For aught we  
*know for certainty*, sin may exist in a future state, and  
may then be purged by the power of divine goodness,  
and yet we may now be enabled to prove this to be the  
case !"<sup>\*</sup> In this passage you confess that you know  
not, but that men may suffer condemnation for sin in a  
future state. Nay, you confess that this may be the  
case, though we are unable to prove it.

Now after these numerous concessions, with what  
propriety can you assert that immortality excludes mise-  
ry ? You lay it down with all the force of an axiom,  
that immortality cannot suffer ; and still you admit that  
the *soul of man is immortal in this world*, and experi-  
ences a *great degree of suffering* ! In fact you urge  
this as an argument to prove that men will not be pun-  
ished after death. Since men suffer so much mental  
agony in this state, you think, it would be unjust to  
punish them beyond the grave ! Now this is giving up  
the whole force of the argument. For if the immortal  
soul suffers in this world, with what consistency can  
you assert, or even suggest, that immortality cannot  
suffer ? The soul you acknowledge is immortal here,†

\* U. Mag. vol. III. p. 186.

† See Atonement, pp. 32, 33.

and of course, it can be no more than immortal in a future world. And if it suffers here, it may suffer there ; at least immortality will not prevent it. Now if your sentiment, that the immortal soul suffers here be true, then your statement, that immortality cannot suffer, must be false. But if the latter be true, then the former must be false. But as you constantly admit, and as your system requires that you should admit, that the soul is immortal in this state, and does experience misery, it follows of course, that your position, that immortality cannot suffer, must be false.

But perhaps you will say, that in the present world the soul is united with a sinful body, and this occasions the suffering which the soul feels ; but in a future state, the soul will be delivered from this corrupt body, and consequently will be exempt from all misery or pain.— This is giving up the whole position at once. It is saying, that immortality does suffer in this world, and might suffer in the next, were it not separated from corruption or sin. This then is resting your system of immediate happiness, not upon the supposed fact, that immortality cannot suffer, but upon the circumstance, that men will then be free from sin. This is giving up the ground on which your argument is based. But no doubt you wish to inquire, whether the apostle does not declare that men shall be raised *incorruptible*, as well as *immortal*. We answer yes—he says this of certain characters. But this again is deviating from the point. By referring to this scripture, you seem to admit that it is not from the simple fact, that men will be raised immortal, but from something else, that you would infer their happiness. The passage to which you refer shall be attended to in its proper place ; but this is not its proper place. The simple inquiry before us is, whether immortality excludes all suffering.

On the subject of immortality, I conceive that many



people essentially err. The word *immortality*, simply denotes *an exemption from death, or an endless life*. This term has reference only to the endless continuance of existence. It has no reference to the character of the being, or to his situation, relative to happiness or misery. An immortal being may be either virtuous or vicious, happy or miserable. We cannot prove that God is good or happy, from the fact that he is immortal. The soul you acknowledge is immortal here, and still you confess that it is sinful and unhappy. In a certain sense, every man is immortal in this world. He has an immortal soul. He may be immortal in another sense. You, Sir, contend that all things take place by divine appointment, or in other words, are as God predetermined they should be; and consequently they could not have been otherwise.\* Now Adam, for instance, lived *nine hundred years*. And according to your views, it was the purpose of God that he should live to that advanced age; and it being the purpose of God that he should live thus long, it was impossible that he should have died before. During that period then, he was *immortal*. He was not subject to death; it being as impossible for him to die, as it is for the purpose of God to fail. Now if the life of Adam had been protracted to ten thousand, or ten million of years, that would not have altered the principle. Or, if the Deity had been pleased to have continued him in being to eternity, the nature of his existence would have been the same. The nature of his existence would not have been changed, if his life had been continued from period to period, and even to eternity. If we live for a limited period, we live not only by divine permission, but by divine support. If we live only for a limited period, we are upheld by God, and that continually. This is a truth you will readily acknowledge. Now if our lives are continued to eternity,

\* Atonement, pp. 37—40.

this cannot alter the principle in the least. For surely, if we cannot live for a limited period without being constantly upheld by God, we cannot expect to live through eternity, independent of his support. St. Paul in a connexion where he was treating of a future, as well as the present life, says, "In him we live, and move, and have our being."\*

But you seem to speak of immortality, as though it were a certain substance, which if once given to men, they would always possess; or in other words, as though the Deity in a future state would give man a constitution, which would continue itself in being to eternity, without the upholding or supporting hand of God.—This notion, I conceive, is contrary both to scripture and reason. The sacred writers plainly teach us that our present and future existence depends constantly upon God. Our Savior when teaching a future life, says to his disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also."† This passage teaches us that we shall live in a future state by the *constant* support of Christ, as agent of the Father. The saints shall live, because Christ lives. But if the constitution given us in a future state, be immortal from its very nature, so as to require no support from God, or his Son Jesus Christ, there can be no propriety in the declaration of our Lord; for on your view of the subject, if men are once raised to a future life, they would live to eternity, though Christ should not. Our Lord confirms this interpretation, in the same connexion, by saying, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches."‡ Branches, we all know, are constantly dependent upon the vine. The branches live, not because the vine gives them an existence which will continue them in being without support from the vine, but because the vine constantly nourishes and supports them. Without this support from the vine, *the branches will soon perish. The branches live by*

\* Acts, xvii. 28.

† John, xiv. 19.

‡ John, xv. 5.

being constantly supported by the vine. This is a just representation of our future life. It is a representation given by our Savior himself. Our future life will be endless, not because God will give us a constitution which will necessarily continue us in being to eternity, and render us independent of the divine Being, but because the Deity will be pleased by the constant exercise of his power, to continue our lives to endless ages.

This is the view of immortality which the scriptures hold forth, and this view is consonant with reason and philosophy. It would be absurd to suppose, that at the resurrection, God will give his creatures a nature, which will render them independent of him to eternity. It is a false philosophy which teaches us that God put all things in motion, and gave them such powers as render them independent of himself for ever. It is unnatural to suppose that, when every thing else is active, the Deity has nothing to perform, and is only an idle spectator of the scene. "It has been the opinion of many of the wisest and best philosophers," says a learned writer, "that the laws of nature are not only the appointment, but the *actual agency* and *immediate energy* of the divine Being himself, exerting itself according to certain stated rules which infinite wisdom has prescribed." The same writer quotes the immortal Newton, together with Drs. Price and Priestley, to substantiate this principle.\* These distinguished philosophers unitedly contend, that *every cause* and *every effect* depend upon the *immediate and constant exercise of the power and mercy of the divine Being*.

Thus we see that the common sense and the most learned philosophy of man concur with the scriptures, in teaching us, that every cause and effect depend upon the *constant exercise of the power and energy of God*.

\* See Belsham's *Evidences of Revealed Religion*, pp. 18, 19. See also Farmer on Miracles.

This being established, it is manifest that immortality does not form an exception to this rule. Nay, we have already seen that this doctrine is clearly taught by the divine Teacher. Hence we are to consider the immortality of man in this point of view, viz. not that God gives us a constitution which is in and of itself incapable of decay, but that our lives will be continued by the constant, the uninterrupted agency of the Deity.

This view of the subject will entirely obviate an objection, which is frequently made to our views, viz. If immortality suffers, it will finally decay and perish—which is a solecism. This will also enable us to see how an immortal soul can suffer in this world. Now if we regard our endless existence as proceeding from the continued energy of the divine Being, and not from an organic system with which we shall be clothed, we can easily perceive, that men may suffer in an immortal state, and their existence may continue to eternity. It is the height of presumption in any man, especially in one who admits that the immortal suffers in this world, and who *knows nothing* about a future world, to say that immortality cannot suffer. That Being who gives us immortality, can easily make us susceptible of pain in that state.

We have now examined your position, that immortal beings cannot endure pain, and have seen that it is unfounded. We have seen from the nature of an endless existence, that misery is by no means excluded. We have also seen that you acknowledge that immortality does suffer in this world; and since you confess that you *know nothing* of a future world, you cannot maintain your position, without the greatest inconsistency and contradiction. We have now considered the premises from which you draw your inference that there can be no misery after death. We have seen that, instead of each man's being raised at death, the scriptures assure

us that the resurrection is a future event. And instead of immortality's excluding pain, we have seen that the reverse of this is taught in the scriptures. In a word, we have seen that one of your premises you dare not even state, and the other you acknowledge to be unfounded. Now will you continue to make use of an argument, the foundation of which you acknowledge to be false? Will you impose upon the public, by reasoning from principles which have no existence in truth? We have seen that your favorite argument is entirely destitute of foundation, and by relying upon this argument in future, you will only show the weakness of your cause.

But you say that the apostle in 1st Corinthians, 15th chapter, teaches us that men will be raised not only immortal, but *incorruptible and glorious*. This passage will require consideration. In the first place, I will remark, that this passage does not favor your scheme in the least. For as you do not assert, and as you cannot prove, that all men are raised to immortality at death, this passage furnishes you with no evidence, that men will be happy before they are raised to this immortal, glorious state. But in reality it implies the contrary. You maintain that men are saved by being raised immortal and glorious. This is saying, that they are not saved until they are thus raised; and as you contend that there is no medium between the mortal and immortal man,\* it follows from hence, that they are unhappy after death until the resurrection. And as the resurrection is a future event, the old world, for example, may now be in misery. Thus we see that 1st Cor. 15th chapter, furnishes a complete confutation of your system. You may urge this portion of scripture against us, but you do it at your peril. And surely your case must be desperate, if you are disposed to sacrifice others on the altar of your own destruction.

\* See U. Mag. Vol. IV. p. 152.

But in relation to the resurrection as taught in 1st Cor. xv. let it be observed ;—we have already seen on the authority of Christ and his apostles, that some are raised *just*, and some *unjust*, some come forward to *life*, and some to *condemnation*. Now whatever the apostle means in the passage in question, it is manifest, that he did not mean to contradict what he and the other sacred writers have said elsewhere. We acknowledge that when the apostle says, it is raised in incorruption, glory, and power, he means that the subject thus raised, is brought to the enjoyment of happiness. But the question is, whether all men are first raised to that happy state. Christ, as we have already seen, says, that some shall come forth to damnation. And if we attend to the passage in question, it will be seen that Paul's language is in perfect accordance therewith. I conceive that the description which the apostle gives of the resurrection, applies only to the saints in this passage.

But you will probably say, that the apostle says, verse 22d,—“For as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive.” We readily admit that this passage applies to all men. But what does the apostle say in the very next verse? “But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.” Here we learn, not that all men will be raised alike to happiness at the same time, but that there will be a difference. “Every man in his own order.” It is evident that the apostle meant to make a distinction among those raised from the dead. But if all are alike raised to enjoyment, there is no order, no distinction. The first order mentioned by the apostle is, “They that are Christ's at his coming.” This implies that all are not his. It would be absurd to say, that those who are Christ's, would be raised next, if all men were his. It is true however, that there is a sense in which all are Christ's. They are all his by redemption. But charac-

teristically they are not all his. Paul says, "Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, *he is none of his.*"\* Here we see on the authority of the same apostle, that there is a sense in which the wicked are not Christ's. So by those who *are Christ's* at his coming, we are to understand believers, and believers only. This is the first order. The apostle teaches the same doctrine in 1st Thess. iv. 16, a passage which we have already quoted. There the apostle says, "The dead in Christ shall rise first." By the *dead in Christ*, in this passage, Paul means the same as he does in the other passage by *those who are Christ's*. It is manifest that by the *dead in Christ*, Paul means believers. Paul when writing to the same church, uses the phrase, *in Christ*, to signify *to become Christians*. "If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature."† Hence it is evident that by the *dead in Christ*, the apostle means believers. The apostle says, "The dead in Christ shall rise first." We cannot suppose that the apostle means *all men* by the dead in Christ, for it would be absurd to say of all men, that they shall rise *first*. This passage then, confirms the interpretation we have given of 1 Cor. xv. 23. One passage asserts that *those who are Christ's*, shall be the *first order* of the resurrection; the other asserts that the *dead in Christ* shall rise *first*. And both of these passages assure us that the apostle was not speaking of all men, but only of believers.

But if all men are to be raised to immortal, happy life, at the same time, where is the order of which the apostle speaks? And if all men are raised to immortal happiness at once, how could the apostle say, that the saints shall rise *first*? Perhaps you will say, that the order to which the apostle alluded, was between Christ and mankind; for Christ is spoken of as the first fruits.

\* Rom. viii. 9.

† 2 Cor. v. 17.

To this I answer, Paul was speaking of the resurrection of mankind, and not of the resurrection of Christ. He mentions Christ's resurrection, it is true, but he mentions it only to show, that mankind shall be raised. In the preceding verse he says, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Here you will perceive that the apostle was speaking, not of Christ's being made alive, but of *mankind's* being made alive by Christ. It was of mankind therefore, that the apostle was speaking, and consequently the order mentioned related to mankind. Thus we see that St. Paul makes a distinction in the resurrection. Believers are the first order, or as he expresses it in the other passage, they shall rise first. This is clearly taught in verse 23d. He then, by way of parenthesis, in the 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th verses, speaks of the rest of mankind, or the other order, and gives us to understand, that they also will be brought in before the end of the mediatorial reign.\* The apostle in the 29th verse resumes the subject of which he was treating in verse 23d, and continues speaking of believers only through the rest of the chapter.

Here then we have a view of the whole subject. In verse 22d, Paul assures us that *all men* shall be raised to life; in verse 23d he tells us, that they shall not all be raised to happiness at the same time, but every man in his own order. He also tells us in this verse that believers will be the first order. Here then believers is the subject introduced. From verse 24th to 28th inclusive, he, by way of parenthesis, speaks of the other order, viz. unbelievers. And then in verse 29th, resumes the subject of believers which was introduced in the 23d, and so continues through the remainder of the chapter to speak of believers, and believers only. From

\* See Dr. Chauncey's interpretation of the passage, *Salvation of all Men*, pp. 202—203.



verse 29th to 41 inclusive, he makes several remarks upon the subject of the resurrection, and then at the 42d verse commences a particular description of the resurrection of the righteous.

But probably you will ask whether I do not believe that all men will enjoy immortality and glory? I answer, yes. I believe with the apostle that all men shall be made alive, but with him I believe also, that believers and unbelievers will be raised in their *own order*. And for the sake of the case, I will admit that the description given of the resurrection in the 42d and following verses, applies to all men; (and in fact I believe it does in principle,) it does not hence follow that all will be brought to this enjoyment at the same time. The case would then stand thus, in the 42d and following verses, Paul speaks of the process of the resurrection, but he has guarded us against any mistake here, by telling us, verse 23d, that every man should be raised in his own order.

The view of the subject we have now given, makes this passage harmonize with other passages of scripture. But on your interpretation this harmony is destroyed. And granting your interpretation to be true, it yields you no assistance, as we have already seen.

Before we dismiss the subject of this objection, we will notice one passage more, which you frequently bring into view, when treating upon this subject. The passage is found in Luke xx. 34, 35, 36. "And Jesus answering, said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal to the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Two remarks upon this passage will show how little it is to your purpose.

1. There is no intimation in the passage that this resurrection takes place at death; and so it does not answer your purpose, as men may suffer after death in an intermediate state. 2. Though you apply this passage to all men alike,\* there is no intimation in the text or its connexion, that it is designed to apply to all men. Does this passage prove that all men will exist beyond death? You yourself will not pretend it. If this was the only passage which speaks of a future state, no one could prove that all will exist beyond the grave. Now it would be palpably absurd to say, that a passage which does not prove that all men will exist after death, proves that all men will enjoy equal happiness in that state. The passage itself plainly implies that a part only will enjoy that blessing. When our Savior says, "they which shall be accounted worthy" to obtain that world, he virtually says that *all* shall not be accounted worthy, and of course will not obtain it. If this favor was to be enjoyed equally by all, at the same time, there would be no propriety in making the distinction which we find in the passage. We cannot interpret this text agreeable to just rules, without admitting that it applies to the righteous only. We have now finished what we had to offer upon the subject embraced in this objection. If you think our remarks have been extended to an unnecessary length, we have our apology in the great stress you lay upon this point. Now, sir, interpret the 1st Cor. xv. as we have done, and it furnishes an argument in our favor. But if to oppose our views, you contend for a different interpretation, you do it at the expense of your own system. As you cannot prove that all men are to be raised at the moment of death, you cannot give a construction to this portion of scripture, which does not entirely overthrow your scheme.

\* Lectures, p. 362.

We will now consider several objections which you make to a future retribution, not so much because we consider them of weight, as because they are so frequently made use of by the abettors of your system. As I regard these objections of but little consequence, I shall treat them with brevity.

You sometimes object to future punishment in these words: "If we reason correctly, when we argue that there must be a future state of retribution in order to cure the crimes committed in this state, why will it not be necessary that a state of retribution beyond the next, be instituted to cure the crimes committed in the next? And why do we not in this way, prove the doctrine of endless sin and misery?"\* This objection briefly stated is this: If men are punished in a future state for crimes committed in this, they must be punished in a *third* state, for the crimes committed in the *second*, and so on to eternity. Now the whole strength of this objection rests upon this principle, viz. *that punishment is not salutary, but vindictive*; a principle in which neither of us believe. Hence you cannot urge this objection without rejecting your own favorite opinion. Besides, this objection weighs as much against your theory as against mine. You believe that men are punished in this world during a *period* of time, for crimes committed in a *preceding period*. Hence this objection can be urged against you, thus: If men are punished during one period for crimes committed in a preceding period, they must be punished a third period for crimes committed in the second, and a fourth, for crimes committed in the third, and so on to eternity. Now, sir, when you can reconcile this objection with your own system, you will then have exploded your own objection.

Again; you object to future punishment on the

\* U. Magazine, vol. III. p. 133.

ground that civil government and human laws are ordained by God, and still the penalties of human laws are confined to this world. After stating that human laws are ordained by God, and the penalties are confined to this state, you say, "Now if all this, which is as plain as any thing in the scriptures, be granted, what room is there for the supposition that the penalty due to transgression, is punishment in the future eternal world?"\* Though this objection has, in principle, been answered in a preceding Letter, I will in addition offer the following. Human governments are either a perfect transcript of the divine government, or they are not. If they are not, then the circumstance that human penalties are confined to this world, is nothing to your purpose. For though human governments do not punish men after death, the divine government may. But if human governments are a perfect transcript of the divine, as they must be to answer your purpose, then some men under the divine government will assuredly escape all punishment, and others will be punished unjustly; for you will acknowledge that this is frequently the case under human governments. Besides, if human governments are a perfect transcript of the divine, then human governments supersede the necessity of the divine; then there is no government but human, so when anarchy prevails in any nation, there is no government at all to take cognizance of the actions of men!! Thus is your argument false in principle, and dangerous in its influence. But as weak and corrupt as it is, we find you frequently bringing it forward. Thus you say, "Let us look around us, and see if prisons, dungeons, and gallows, are not a sufficient argument to prove that the wicked are recompensed in the earth."† According to this statement, if men are not confined in prison, hung upon the gallows, or punished in any other way by civil

\* Lectures, p. 9.

† Lect. p. 304.

power, they are not punished at all, how guilty soever they may be.

Again; you tell us that temporal rewards are sufficient to stimulate us to religion and virtue.\* But how are they sufficient? Do they actually produce this effect? Are all men religious and virtuous? No one will pretend this. And to say that any cause is sufficient to produce an effect, which it does not produce, looks a little like a contradiction.

Again; You object to a future retribution by saying, "That Christ came into *this* world, to save us in *another*, is contrary to all the representations which are found in the scripture."† A few remarks will show, that this statement is hasty and unfounded. You will admit that Christ came into this world to save us from sin. But is this salvation effected in this world? You will not even pretend it. You frequently assert, as we have already seen, that men are saved by the resurrection. But does the resurrection to immortality take place in this life? The absurdity of the supposition is manifest. So it is evident, that Christ saves sinners in a future state. Now if Christ does not save men in another state, some will not be saved at all. The heathen who never hear of Christ, cannot be saved by him in this world. They must therefore be saved by Christ in a future state, if they are saved at all. You must then give up your belief in Universal Salvation, or acknowledge that this objection has no weight.

Another objection to a future retribution is contained in these words—"If one sows grain in a field in New-England, it follows of natural consequence that the harvest will be gathered from the same field; but there appears to be no natural connexion, as between cause and effect, between sowing grain in this country, and gathering a harvest from it in Europe. St. Paul says,

\* Lect. p. 301.

† Ibid. p. 14.

‘He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.’ This seems perfectly natural, because ‘whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.’ But to argue that corruption may be gathered from an incorruptible state, is to argue against the very nature of things.”\*

This passage seems to present several distinct ideas. One is, that immortality cannot suffer, which has been already examined. Another distinct part of the argument is contained in the passage of scripture, “he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.” Because this passage says that they shall reap corruption of the *flesh*, you conclude that it must be in this state of existence. Now if all this should be granted, it would not oppose our views. Because men are punished in this world, it does not follow that they will not be in the future. But it is not certain that the term *flesh*, is here used literally. The word *flesh* is frequently used to signify sin or sinful dispositions. This is probably its meaning in this passage. But your argument requires that the word *flesh* should be used literally to signify the corporeal body. Now the word *flesh* in this passage must be used figuratively, or it must not. If it is used figuratively, the passage is nothing to your purpose. For the text would then read in sentiment, if men are sinful, they shall reap their reward from sin. The passage would then teach that sin shall be punished without any reference to time or place. But if the word *flesh* is used literally to signify the corporeal body, then sowing to the flesh, is doing things in obedience to the wants and necessities of the body; then any thing which is done to satisfy the wants of the body, is sinful, and will be punished. Even if we labor industriously to clothe our bodies, or to procure food for their subsistence, we sow to the flesh; we commit sin, and shall

surely be punished. Thus, Sir, you reap absurdity rather than advantage from your argument.

You attempt to support your interpretation of the passage, by saying, "There appears to be no connexion between sowing grain in this country, and reaping a harvest from it in Europe. But if we sow grain in a field in New England, we shall of natural consequence reap the harvest from the same field."—Now this statement, though true relative to agriculture, does not justly apply to the case before us. You say there is no connexion between sowing grain in this country, and reaping the harvest in Europe. True—and for this good reason; the field in this country and the field in Europe are not one and the same identical field. They are two distinct and separate fields, having no relation to each other. But will you say the same relative to present and future existence? Will you admit that an individual in this life, and the same individual in a future life, are as distinct from each other, as one field in America, and another in Europe? that they are two distinct intelligent beings? Dare you assert that Paul, for instance, in a future state, is another being totally distinct from what he was here, having no more relation to what he was in this world, than there is between the two fields abovementioned? If you will not admit this, you acknowledge that your argument is foreign to the point, and so amounts to nothing. And if you do admit it, you espouse a cause which is no other than infidelity in disguise.

Since you have borrowed your figures from agriculture, and since the apostle uses *sowing* and *reaping* to represent our actions and their reward, let us for a moment look at the process of raising grain. Do we, as your system requires, sow grain, and reap the harvest in *the very act of sowing*? Or do we not, as our system requires, sow the grain, and then wait a period for the

harvest? Let the experience of husbandmen answer the question.

Another method which you adopt to avoid a future punishment for a part of mankind, is to represent all men equally guilty. If you do not state this in express words, still you use language which naturally gives this impression. At one time you represent all "whose labors have been in the ministry from the highest prelate down to the lay preacher," as equally guilty.\* At another time you represent a "company of meek and humble believers in Jesus," and a "company of profane sailors," as being alike pious in the sight of God.† But does this description correspond with the scripture account? Do the sacred writers represent all men as possessing one and the same character? or rather do they not divide mankind into two classes, the *righteous* and the *wicked*? It is so evident that the scriptures speak of two classes, the *righteous* and the *wicked*, that you admit the distinction. But you attempt to do away its force by pretending that they are both found in the *same individual at the same time*! You say, "We find the *righteous* and the *wicked* in the *same individual*.—Yes—in the *same man* and *at the same time*, we find the *righteous* and the *wicked*, him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."‡ We readily admit that the same individual may be wicked at one period of his life, and righteous at another. When the evil disposition predominates, he is, in scripture phraseology, denominated *wicked*; and when the good disposition predominates, he is denominated *righteous*. But to assert as you do, that the *righteous* and *wicked* are in the same man *at the same time*, is not interpreting, but destroying the scriptures. You make the *righteous* and the *wicked* not individuals, but simply abstract principles or charac-

\* Notes on the Parables, pp. 18, 19, 20. † Lectures, p. 291.

‡ Lectures, p. 292.



ters. But what numerous absurdities does this principle involve! If the righteous and the wicked signify not persons, but abstract characters, as they must on your interpretation of these terms, then the individual experiences neither happiness nor misery; for when the sacred writers say that the righteous shall enjoy happiness, and the wicked experience misery, we must conclude that the individual has nothing to do with either; the one being enjoyed by the good principle, and the other endured by the bad!!

Besides, it is a palpable absurdity to say that a character abstractly considered, is capable of experiencing either happiness or misery. But let us look at some passage, where the terms *righteous* and *wicked* occur, and see if we can understand them consistently on your sense of these terms. Take the 25th of Matthew, for instance. In that scripture the righteous and the wicked are spoken of; they are said to be separated from each other; the one are rewarded, the other punished. When Christ sentenced the wicked to a state of punishment, he assigns the reasons for so doing. "For I was an hungered," says he to the wicked, "and ye gave me no meat; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." Now if by the wicked, we are to understand, not persons, but an evil principle, then we must absurdly suppose that Christ sentenced an evil principle to a state of punishment, because it had not *visited him*!! This I trust will be sufficient to show the falsity of your statement, that the righteous and the wicked are in the *same man at the same time*. As to all men's being equally guilty, I conceive that no considerate person will admit it. And you yourself will not admit that in point of moral excellence, you stand no higher than the convicts in the State Prison. In this manner you acknowledge, that there is a difference in the characters of men,

I have now attended to all the principal objections which you urge against a future retribution, so far at least as I have learned them. I have endeavored to state your objections in all their force. If you have any other objections more formidable than these I have considered, I am ignorant of them. And I think you will admit that the arguments and objections which I have considered, are those on which you mostly rely. The *moral influence* of the two systems will be considered in our next.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER IX.

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### *Moral Influence, and Concluding Remarks.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

In taking leave of this subject, I think it not improper to offer a few remarks upon the *moral influence* of the two systems. It will readily be conceded that truth has a more salutary influence than error. That system which has the best influence upon society, must have a higher claim to our faith than any other theory. The gospel is designed to save sinners. Christ visited the earth to "save his people from their sins." And this salvation is effected by rendering them virtuous and holy. Since virtue and happiness are inseparably connected, that system which is the most productive of virtue, best answers the purpose for which the gospel was given, and consequently is the most likely to be the truth. These remarks will strike your mind as self-evident truths. Before inquiring into the moral influence of the two systems, two things will be premised. 1. *Doctrinal views do not have so great an influence upon the morals of society, as most people imagine.* There may be many causes which counteract the natural tendency of a doctrine. The natural disposition of the person may, in a great measure, destroy the legitimate influence of a system. "The doctrine may dwell in the head more than in the heart. It may be believed in theory, but not reduced to practice."\* So that upon the whole, theoretical divinity does not produce so great an effect upon morals, as we might at first imagine.

\* See a Sermon on the subject of this controversy, by Rev. Edward Turner.

2. *Doctrines have different influences upon different persons.* When a man by his own study and reflection, comes understandingly into any doctrine, however fatal its natural tendency may be, it will not be very likely to corrupt his morals. If any inquiring mind in search of truth, should at last settle down in Atheism, and embrace this sentiment, in an understanding manner, his morals might remain as they were when he was a believer in divine revelation. His knowledge of the nature of things would induce him to be honest and upright in his dealings with mankind. But let him proclaim this doctrine to the vulgar, who would take it on trust, and defend it with arguments which he had put into their mouths, and it would be likely to have a very different effect. Though they might believe it as firmly as their master, and even might have less doubts upon the subject than he, still it would naturally corrupt the one, more than the other. So a man who comes understandingly into a belief of your system, may continue to be exemplary in virtue. The refinement and elevation of mind, which he may have acquired in search of truth, may continue to influence his conduct, and preserve him from falling into sin. But let this doctrine be taught to the public at large, and it will have a different influence. Upon men of less study and reflection, it will be left to have its natural influence, and so will tend to weaken their sense of accountability to God. But upon men of more study and refinement, the deleterious effects of this doctrine are neutralized by the more exalted sentiments of their natures; and if their sense of accountability is weakened by this theory, still that reflection and study, which led to its embrace, will have refined the mind; and this mental refinement will exert an influence over the man in a considerable degree, and so keep the man moral. Though there may be exceptions to this, as all general rules, still I am per-

suaded that what I have stated will hold good in most cases.

To speak of the moral influence of your system, is a subject of a delicate nature. This consideration almost inclines me to omit this part of the subject. But there is one consideration which induces me to believe that I can treat upon this part of the subject, without giving offence. The writer of these Letters, with others, published, a few years ago, his belief in the *immoral tendency* of your system, and although at first you were a little dissatisfied, still an assurance on our part, that we regarded you with *Christian fellowship*, was "fully satisfactory" to you, and induced you to "reciprocate Christian feelings and fellowship."\* Since an assurance of our fellowship was all that was required at that time, we presume that the same will be *fully satisfactory* at this. From the circumstances alluded to above, I feel fully assured that I can speak freely of the immoral influence of your system, without giving any offence, when I assure you that I do not intend this as a withdrawal of fellowship.

We have several times, in the course of the Letters, mentioned the immoral tendency of your system and some of your arguments. You maintain that all men are duly punished in this world. Now if this be the case, then sin punishes itself sufficiently, without the intervention of any person or power. Some men commit sin, and are not punished by any human law; and as you maintain that these persons, as well as others, are sufficiently punished in this state, it follows that a punishment, amply sufficient, grows necessarily out of every act of transgression, and so punishes men to the full amount of their deserts, without the interference of the civil arm. This grows directly out of your views,

\* See *Christian Repository*, Vol. III. p. 165. See also the *Minutes of the Southern Association* for June and Dec. 1823.

and is what you frequently contend for. Now if sin punishes itself sufficiently, then there is no need of any human laws; nay, human laws are only engines of cruelty, for they punish those who have been sufficiently punished already. Since human laws, on your system, are cruel and unjust, they ought to be repealed. No good citizen can countenance a law which inflicts a punishment upon the innocent, or, which is the same thing, upon those who are duly punished already. Your system aims a death-blow at the very foundation of all law, and consequently, of all order. It saps the very foundation of all institutions, and if it were reduced to practice, would introduce a state of general anarchy and confusion. This is the fatal, but legitimate tendency of your scheme, if reduced to practice.

But while your system has this fatal tendency, nothing of the kind can be charged upon our system. I very much doubt whether you can lay your hand upon your heart, and say in the presence of your Maker, that you believe that a future retribution corrupts the morals of society. But if your system has any salutary influence, ours has all its advantages, and others superadded. You say, that virtue is rewarded in this world; we believe in all the reward which is enjoyed in this world, and also in an additional reward hereafter. And will *increasing* the reward make people *less* virtuous? No; the reward will be greater, the motive more powerful, and consequently will be more likely to stimulate to virtue. Our system not only exhibits a greater incentive to virtue, than yours, but it lays a greater restraint upon vice. Your doctrine tells the villain who is plotting the assassination of his fellow creatures, that if he falls in his attempt, superlative glory will be his *immediate* portion; ours tells him, that if he loses his life in such a horrid attempt, he will experience a state of *correction and chastisement*. Armed with your system,

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might not the robber go forth with composure, and say to himself, I am sinning, it is true, but if I succeed I shall obtain a fortune; and if I lose my life in the attempt, I shall go in an instant to the enjoyment of heaven? In either case I shall be a gainer, he might very naturally say, therefore I will embark immediately in this bold adventure. I do not mean to signify that a belief in your system will make every man a robber. But let a person who is meditating upon this subject, and who has weighed all the other motives which have any bearing upon the point, and finds his mind in a state of equilibrium—I say, let such a person, under these circumstances, take your system into the account, and I will submit it to the judgment of mankind to determine, whether it would not encourage, rather than dissuade him from his bold adventure. Suppose a person to be in a state of trouble, would he not have an inducement to put a period to his own existence? Might he not say, and say with speciousness, that God required nothing of him but what would promote his own happiness, and by committing suicide, he might exchange the troubles of earth for the joys of heaven? I will appeal to reason to determine which system would be likely to have the most restraint upon a person who was upon a poize between virtue and crime.

You, sir, embrace the gospel in opposition to infidelity. You consider the gospel as an invaluable treasure, thank God for this great gift, and pray that the religion of Jesus may become universal. But if your system be the gospel, how is it preferable to infidelity? What motive to virtue, or what restraint upon vice does your system contain, which is not found in some systems of Deism? How can you invite an unbeliever to embrace the gospel? Or what excellency does your system contain more than his? You believe that the gospel is valuable only as it makes men virtuous. Now suppose

you should invite a deist to embrace the gospel, he would naturally ask you wherein the gospel was better than natural religion? You would probably tell him that the gospel had a more salutary influence than deism. He would then challenge you to produce a single motive to virtue, or restraint upon vice which did not exist in his system. Should you tell him, that *the way of the transgressor was hard* in this world, while the virtuous and good enjoyed peace of mind, he would probably tell you, that he believed that virtue was rewarded and vice punished here; that he believed in all the rewards and punishments which are experienced in this world, and you could believe in no more. Thus far he would tell you, that your system had no advantage over his; and you would be compelled to acknowledge it. Should you tell him that the gospel taught the final happiness of all men, and had a great demand upon their gratitude, he could tell you, were he a disciple of Tindal, for example, that he believed in the endless happiness of all men also; and if this was an incentive to virtue, it was found in his system as much as in yours. How would you, how could you meet such an opponent? I do not see how you could avoid confessing, that your system had no advantage over his.

But perhaps you will say that most deists deny a future state, and of course your system would have an advantage over theirs. This then is admitting that some systems of deism have as high a claim as your system, though others fall below it. But in relation to a future state, let us inquire, what your particular views are? You represent the soul of man as an *emanation from the Deity*,\* and contend that his future happy life consists in returning to the fountain from whence he came. This, as far as I am able to judge, is the common opin-

\* Atonement, pp. 120, 192.



ion entertained by the generality of those who embrace your system. Now this opinion was not only embraced by those ancient heretics, the Gnostics, but is the popular opinion of infidels at this day.\* No unbeliever in divine revelation, who is not a complete Atheist, would object to a future existence on this ground. Thus we see that your system, relative to its moral influence, (the only thing whersin any system can be valuable) has little or no advantage over infidelity. In fact, some of the principal advocates for your system seem to admit this. Mr. Kneeland, when treating upon this very subject, says, "But what is there, after all, in rational Deism, that will not *perfectly coincide* with rational Christianity?"† He further pronounces the book of Revelations a "heretical figment, void of reason." He labors to point out the discrepancies between the evangelists, pronounces their manner of writing "careless and loose," and finally gives it as his opinion, that the gospels were not written by those whose names they bear, but were the *forgeries* of a later age. But while he speaks thus contemptuously of the Scriptures, he compliments the book of nature in true deistical language. His words are—Nature is "a book, in which *all* can read with the eyes of the understanding; which has not been, as we know it could not, neither indeed can it ever be, adulterated by the arts of designing men. It has neither been interpolated nor mutilated; nor can any part thereof be spurious; which cannot be said, with truth, respecting the Bible!" But the above cannot surprise us, when we consider that Mr. Kneeland joins issue with the Atheist, and contends that God is matter, and that matter is eternal. He says, that God "is an elementary principle of real matter, which inheres in caloric and

\* Palmer's Principles of Nature, &c.

† Philadelphia U. Magazine.

oxygen, is as much material as they are, and is never separate from them!"\*

I will not attempt to confute these wild and anti-christian notions, but will observe that they are the genuine fruits of the system I am opposing. Mr. K. is a gentleman of candor and frankness, and will fearlessly state whatever grows out of his system. And when men are prepared to reject a future retribution, we may naturally expect, if they pursue the subject to its final result, that they will embrace views like those expressed above. That system, which leads men to pronounce some of the most distinguished miracles of Christ "altogether incredible," and to assert they "surpass all belief," and "do no credit to Jesus, admitting them true," may, with no small degree of propriety, be called *another gospel*. This Mr. K. has done, and this appears to be the natural offspring of the system here controverted.

I will go farther, and with your permission will compare your system with Atheism. You maintain that your system has a peculiar advantage, because it brings the rewards and punishments immediately home to the hearts of men; whereas a future retribution, by being at a distance, loses nearly all its influence.† According to your views then, rewards and punishments in the present life are the only stimulants to virtue; and these, we have seen, you consider sufficient. Now let us compare this with Atheism. You believe that rewards and punishments are experienced in this world, and the Atheist believes exactly the same. Though he disbelieves the being of a God, still his experience and observation teach him that virtue and happiness, sin and misery, are united either by chance, or something else.

\* See Three Sermons, delivered in New-York, March, 1826, by Abner Kneeland, pp. 6, 8, 20, 26, 40.

† Lect. pp. 299, 300. Also Reply to Merritt, pp. 16, 17.

He believes in all the happiness and misery which men experience in this world, and you can believe in no more. Now what advantage, relative to moral influence, has your system over Atheism? The Atheist's scheme presents the same retribution, and of course the same motives as yours. And I acknowledge, that I do not see wherein your system, in this respect, has any better moral influence than Atheism.

But you will probably say that your system unfolds a glorious immortality, which furnishes us with a strong motive to obedience—a motive which Atheism does not present. We confess that this statement does, in a degree, prove your system preferable to Atheism. But still this statement only involves you in another difficulty. By saying that a belief in a future state of happiness furnishes a strong motive to obedience, you acknowledge that a future retribution will have a great influence upon the actions of men. For certainly, if the prospect of future happiness leads men to pursue virtue, the prospect of a future punishment will lead them to forsake sin. So if you contend that a future retribution furnishes no additional motive to virtue, you admit that your system has no better influence than Atheism. And if, to avoid this, you admit that a retribution beyond death does increase the motives to virtue, then you acknowledge that our system has a better effect upon society than yours, for you contend that men are always governed by motives.

The view I have given of your system, is that which is entertained by those who have no interest in the dispute between us. Dr. Bancroft says, "Every view we can take of the character of God, of his moral government, and of the final issue of his administration, forbids the supposition, that God beholds the righteous and the wicked with the same favor; and that he will, at the consummation of the present system of things, place

them indiscriminately in the same condition of glory and happiness. Could the doctrine of Universal Salvation, in *the above sense*, be with confidence embraced, Christian faith would no longer have efficacy as a principle of moral action; motives to a virtuous life, in prospect of a future retribution, would lose all their force; and to *all the moral purposes of society*, in principle there could be no difference between the Christian and the Atheist.”\*

This statement is taken from a work which you have complimented in the following manner: “The Christian charity and candor, which are peculiar and permanent characteristics of the work, justly entitle it to the respectful attention of an enlightened public.”† The Doctor, although he neither believed in your system nor mine, but wrote expressly against both, speaks of our scheme with respect, while he considers yours no better than atheism. This is an evidence of the public sentiment upon the subject.

I conceive that your doctrine leads very naturally to a denial of a future state of being. You say, that men are rewarded and punished in this world to the full amount of their deserts. Now it might be very natural to inquire, why should man live in a future state, if his accounts are all squared at death? Why should he be continued in being, if he has no punishment to receive on the one hand, nor reward to obtain on the other? I say, these inquiries naturally grow out of your views. We have a striking example of this recorded in history.

“The Sadducees, a sect among the Jews, derived their name from Sadoc, a Jewish scholar who was president of the Sanhedrim, about two hundred and sixty years before Christ. He taught his pupils that they ought to serve God, *not from a mean regard to future reward and punishment*, but from pure filial love to him. Hence

\* Sermons, pp. 385, 386.

† U. Mag. vol. IV. p. 162.

Sadoc inferred, that there was no reward or punishment after this life. By degrees their doctrine assumed a very libertine and impious form. The New Testament assures us, that in the first ages of Christianity, they denied the resurrection of the dead, the existence of angels and departed spirits. According to Josephus, they looked upon death as the final extinction of soul and body: they maintained, that the providence and retributions of God were confined to this world, and on this ground only they worshipped and obeyed him.”\*

In this case we have the different stages through which this doctrine passed. Sadoc began by denying a future reward. From this he inferred, and very justly, that there would be no future retribution. This led him to believe that there was no future state of being, and this gave rise to libertinism and impiety. Since this appears so natural from the very nature of the case, and since we have the above striking example before us, may we not be permitted to say, that this is the natural tendency of your system? This conclusion is justified by the fact, that among the warm admirers of your system, there is a good proportion of them who deny the resurrection of the dead! a circumstance truly painful, but still a sober fact.

From what has been offered, I trust it will appear, that in point of moral influence, your system has nearly the same influence as that of atheism. I do not mean to insinuate that you are inclined to that system, but still I am greatly astonished to hear you advocate the principle *that man is accountable only to the law of his own mind* † a principle at war with revelation, and even with the existence of a God—a principle which is the very foundation of atheism, and pernicious in its influ-

\* Tappan's Lectures on the Jewish Antiquities, pp. 227, 228.

† Atonement, pp. 15, 16, 20.

ence. By comparing the moral influence of your scheme with that of a future retribution, I think it must be obvious that the advantage lies entirely on our side.

We will now notice several arguments which you offer in defence of the moral influence of your system. To show the salutary influence of your system above ours, you say,\* "My young son asks me what recompense will be allowed him, if he is faithful to me in all things, until he is of age? I tell him that his recompense will be my full approbation, day by day, as much wholesome food as he wants, together with all needed clothing, with all other comforts and favors which he needs. He then proposes to relinquish one half of his food and raiment, and to go hungry and half naked, and yet do his whole duty, if I will make him an equal heir with my other children, in my will. I reply to my child, and say, Son, my love to you has secured to you all that you ask in respect to my final will, and you shall have the whole recompense of well doing during your nonage. Should I by this lessen his motive to obedience and filial faithfulness? No; surely, I should greatly increase his encouragement."

It is manifest that you designed the above as a just representation of the two systems in regard to their moral influence; for you introduce it for that express purpose. But a more entire misrepresentation of the subject cannot be stated. The impression which your similitude is calculated to give, is, that your system allows men all the comfort they can enjoy in this world, while ours *deprives them of one half*. But the falsity of this must be obvious to every reflecting mind. *We believe in all the reward which is experienced in this world.* And do you believe in any more? You must answer this question affirmatively or negatively. If you answer in the affirmative, then surely your faith is un-

\* U. Mag. vol. 4. p. 154.

founded, for you believe in a greater reward here on earth than exists in fact. And if you answer in the negative, then you acknowledge that your representation above is unjust. There is no other alternative.

Your argument, stated in a logical form in its greatest plausibility, would stand as follows: You would say, "My system gives men a *full* reward here, while that of a future retribution gives them *but half* that reward here. Now as the whole is greater than *one half*, it follows that my system has twice the moral influence of the other." Though there may be a taking plausibility in this argument, or rather sophism, every person who possesses a small degree of judgment, must see its fallacy. We have already observed that we believe in *all the reward* which is experienced in this world, and you can believe in no more. This then I will lay down as a settled point, viz. *that we both believe in the same quantity of reward in this world*. Now you believe that the reward men receive here, is their full reward, but we believe that in addition to this reward which is enjoyed here, they will receive a glorious reward hereafter. We then believe in a greater reward for virtue than your system admits.

Now let us test your argument by mathematics, a science which will show the result even to a fraction. We will suppose that the sum total of the reward of the righteous in this world is equal to 50, and the reward which we believe will be bestowed upon the righteous after death, is equal to 50 more. This makes the whole reward on your scheme amount to 50, and on ours to 100. Now to state your argument mathematically and in a logical form, it would stand thus;—My system offers a reward of the *whole* of 50, while that of a future retribution offers only *one half* of 100; and as the *whole* of 50 is *more* than *one half* of 100, it follows that my system offers a greater reward than theirs! Now this

is a perfect representation of your argument, and its fallacy must be obvious to the weakest capacity. By this representation it will be seen that our system offers a reward in this world, equally as great as yours. And in addition to this, it offers a great reward hereafter. And is not the motive greater on our system than on yours? There is no room for debate here. What can be offered to show that your system has as salutary an influence as ours? Does your system bring the reward immediately upon the act of virtue? So does ours. And if this adds to the motive, our system enjoys its advantage as well as yours. In fine, our system has all the advantages of which yours can boast, and others in addition.

You frequently object to a future punishment on the ground that it excites fear, and fear subverts love to God.\* Upon this we will offer the following remarks. *It is just and proper to excite the fears of men.* All the threatenings in the scriptures are designed to excite the fears of sinners. And to say that our fears ought not to be excited, is precisely the same as to say that all the threatenings ought to be erased from the scriptures. The sacred writers exhort us to *fear God* in numerous instances in the scriptures. And what is so clearly taught in the divine oracles, is in perfect accordance with the dictates of reason. Why has God implanted within us the principle of fear, if it is never to be brought into exercise? And are penalties affixed to human laws for any other reason than to excite fear? This is evidence that it is the common sentiment of mankind, that it is proper to excite the fears of the disobedient. Now if you object to our system on the ground that it excites fear, you in reality object to the universal sentiment of mankind and to the uniform language of the scriptures. Besides, when you say that our system

\* U. Mag. vol. IV. p. 153.



excites fear more than yours, you acknowledge that it presents a greater dissuasive from vice. And further; it is a common sentiment with you, that men always act with a design to increase their happiness, and will not refrain from sin, till they are convinced that sin destroys their happiness. Now this is acknowledging that their fears must be excited in order to induce them to repent. And how can this fear subvert love to God? You acknowledge that they will refrain from sin, when they are convinced that sin is destructive to their enjoyment. And how does this induce them to refrain from sin? Why, by exciting their fears. And does it subvert love to God to induce men to refrain from sin? Do you never tell your hearers, that the *way of the transgressor is hard*? Yes. Why do you make this statement? To prompt them to a virtuous course. Thus you confess that it is proper to excite the fears of men. And this, instead of subverting love to God, actually produces it. Again; you frequently assert that your system has a greater moral influence than ours, because it brings the punishment near, and so increases the motive to break off from sin. Now surely you will not be so inconsistent, as to object to our system on the ground of its exciting fear, while you boast of yours for that very reason.

When treating upon this very subject, you frequently quote the passage, "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance." This text is brought forward to show, that it is improper to persuade men by terror. But let us not be imposed upon by words. The term *goodness* is sometimes used in scripture to signify the *pure mercy* which God manifests towards his creatures in conferring real happiness upon them, and sometimes it is used in a broader sense to signify all his dealings with his creatures, including punishments as well as rewards. This you will acknowledge. The term *goodness*, in the passage in question, must have one or the other of these

meanings. Now if the term *goodness* is used in its broadest sense, to include *all* the divine administration, judgments as well as mercies, it is nothing to your purpose. On this interpretation of the word *goodness*, the passage simply teaches that punishments as well as rewards, the justice as well as the mercy of God, lead to repentance.

But if the term *goodness* is used in the other sense to signify mercy, and that alone, what does the passage teach? Why, that the mercy of God leadeth to repentance. But does the passage teach us that mercy is the *only* means which leads to repentance? No; it does not; it simply says that the goodness or mercy of God leadeth to repentance. But do not judgments also lead to repentance? Yes; the same apostle says that "godly sorrow worketh repentance." The case then stands like this; men are led to repentance by mercies and by judgments. And you yourself constantly maintain, that punishment is salutary; that God punishes his creatures only to amend them. Now when you say that all punishment is salutary, you acknowledge that punishment leads to repentance. Now with what propriety can you assert, or even insinuate, as is often done, that the fear of punishment has no efficacy in leading sinners to repentance, while your whole scheme rests upon the principle, that punishment is salutary, and is inflicted *only to reform the transgressor*? These remarks are sufficient to show that your objection has no force.

From what has been offered upon the moral tendency of your system, I think it will be obvious to the reader, that it is corrupt in principle, and if reduced to practice, would have a bad effect upon society. And the representations you frequently give of sin, are such as would naturally impress the mind with the idea, that sin is no evil, and that the sinner ought not to be punished at all. *In order to show the desert of sin, and how far it ought*

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to be punished, you introduce the following simile. "You who are the parent of a number of children, have an enemy, who, taking advantage of the dusk of the evening, and by putting on some of your clothes, and by imitating your voice, deceives your children, so that while they think they are following your directions through the most dreary, unpleasant ways, they are zealously executing your enemy's most cruel injunctions. The poor deluded children sometimes complain of their hard service, and of being destitute of refreshment or rest, but are told to hold on with good courage, that though their lot be hard at present, they may rest assured, that as it is their kind father who is leading them, he will reward them ten-fold for all they suffer. This deception goes on till morning. No sooner than daylight appears, one of your children happens to get a glance of the haggard visage of your inveterate foe! He starts back, and refuses to go any further, and calls on his brethren and sisters to stop, and tells them they are all deceived, and are devoted to the service of their father's enemy. They no sooner see their error, than their deluder leaves them, and you find your wandering offspring, wounded and half dead. When they see you they rejoice, and fly to your embrace, deeply regret the delusion that has led them from you, and humbly implore your favor. The question now before you is this, will you now punish your emaciated offspring because they have been deluded into misery and want? Your answer is anticipated. You reply, no, surely my children have suffered enough, I will now let them see that their father's yoke is easy, and that his burthen is light."\*

Let any person read the above, and he can no longer doubt relative to the moral influence of your system. The sentiment therein expressed goes directly to justify

\* Lect. p. 250.

every transgression. In the first place, the sentiment is utterly false. It was introduced by you to show the just desert of sin. But it goes directly to show that sin does not exist. You state, that these children *think they are following their father's directions*, while they are following their father's enemy. By this you would teach us that every sinner, when committing the grossest iniquity, really thinks that he is obeying the commands of God! But will this sentiment accord with the scriptures? By no means. We read of those who know their master's will and do not perform it, and of those who sin *wilfully* after they have received the knowledge of the truth. Now will you pretend that those who sin *wilfully*, think they are obeying the commands of God? It is a direct contradiction in terms. And will you presume to say that the thief, the pirate, and the murderer, think that they are acting in obedience to the requirements of their heavenly Father! Every person must acknowledge the falsity of your statement. And yet you represent this as the just desert of sin!

Having seen the falsity of your representation, now let us inquire into the moral influence of the above quoted paragraph. By your simile you give us to understand, that every sinner is so far deluded as to believe that he is doing his duty, when perpetrating the most horrid deeds. Yes, according to your representations, the pirate, when robbing his fellow beings of their property, and wantonly taking their lives to glut his insatiate cruelty, *thinks* that he is *following the directions* of his Father in heaven! I will not remark upon the absurdity of this supposition, but I will suppose that this strange sentiment should be generally believed. What would be the effect? Why, men would conclude, and justly too, from their system, that murder and robbery were no crimes; and, in fine, that no act whatever

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was sinful. For no person will pretend that it is criminal for any person to do that which he really thinks God has commanded him to perform. And being persuaded that no act was sinful, they would of course contend that no person ought to be punished! Thus, sir, if your system was generally embraced and reduced to practice, men might steal, rob and murder with a high hand, and feel the fullest assurance that they should not be punished by any law, human or divine! Now if such a sentiment is not replete with mischief, and pernicious in its influence, I know of no sentiment that can be.

Many who have been the advocates of your scheme, have been convinced of its deleterious influence. It is worthy of remark, that those who have come over to the system of Universal Salvation, and have since rejected the system, have been strenuous advocates for your particular views. Crossman, Kinsman, and Smith, who have lately renounced the doctrine of Universal Salvation, and have declared to the world that the doctrine was of dangerous tendency, were with you in sentiment, and doubtlessly judged of our general system, by their particular belief.

Though I have labored to show, and I think have plainly shown, that your system is of an immoral tendency, you will not understand me as saying, or even insinuating, that your character is bad. You will undoubtedly perceive that I have spoken of your system as *such*. The corruption I have been endeavoring to point out, lies in your system, and not in your character. Your character may be good, notwithstanding your system may be corrupt. Because some climates are unhealthy, it does not follow that all the inhabitants of those climates are dangerously sick, or that they are sick at all. There may be many causes which counteract the unhappy effect of the climate, and preserve *some at least* in perfect health. And so in relation to

your system—there may be many causes, which exert an influence upon the mind more powerful than a belief in a speculative opinion. In a word, I speak of your system in the same manner that you speak of Calvinism, for instance. You pronounce that system of dangerous influence. But you do not mean to be understood, that all who profess that doctrine are immoral men. You are free to declare that there are many pious and practical Christians professing that belief. I joyfully admit your moral character, and will do you the justice to ascribe it to your virtuous disposition, and not to your system.

But although your system may not produce immorality among its public advocates, still I believe that I may assert that it has one unhappy effect even upon them; it induces them, in their public labors, to dwell *too much* upon *doctrines*, and *too little* upon *moral duties*. I think the public will bear me witness when I say, that those preachers who are with you in sentiment, dwell less upon practical piety and morality, than those do, who believe in a future retribution.

I have already stated that I do not, by any thing contained in these Letters, mean to be understood as denying you my fellowship. And I will here repeat, that I do not, by any thing herein contained, intend to deny you "the name and character of a Christian minister." With this assurance you have already acknowledged yourself satisfied, and consequently all further apology is unnecessary.

As Christian fellowship is now introduced, I will offer a passing remark upon that subject. The ground of Christian fellowship with me is simply this;—a *belief in the divine legation of Christ*. If a man possessing a *good moral character*, professes to believe in the *divinity of the scriptures*, I consider him entitled to my *fellowship as a Christian*. Christian fellowship does not ne-

cessarily suppose a perfect unity of sentiment on every subject pertaining to religion. Men may believe in different systems, preach different doctrines, and belong to different associations or orders, and still be in fellowship with each other. When I tell a person, that I fellowship him as a Christian, I do not pledge myself to give countenance to every opinion in which he believes. In these remarks, however, and in fact, in all that is contained in these Letters, I write simply as an individual. Though many of my brethren agree with me in believing a future retribution, I know not how far the arguments I have made use of in these sheets, may meet their approbation.

I have now closed my examination of this subject. My object has been truth. I have endeavored to present the doctrine of a future retribution in its proper light, and to exhibit some of the principal arguments which convince me of its truth. And in examining your system, I have endeavored to state it correctly, and to meet your arguments fairly. And though I have spoken with the greatest freedom relative to your opinions, I have endeavored to avoid every thing which would look like an attack upon your moral character. How the arguments I have adduced will strike your mind, I am unable to determine. In examining and weighing the arguments in favor of a future retribution, you will consider that the question is not, whether any one argument, separately, is sufficient to establish that doctrine, but whether they are all sufficient, when taken collectively, and in a proper chain. All moral evidence is made up of probabilities; and though the probability may not be great, when each argument is viewed separately, still when a great number of probabilities are united, they amount to moral certainty. And it is in this connected view, that you are desired to weigh the

arguments advanced in the different parts of my book in favor of a future retribution.

Though these Letters are not written to provoke controversy, still, as they are submitted to you and the public for examination, they are liable to be attacked. Nor have I the least objection to their being reviewed. But, sir, should you attempt a reply, I have this request to make, viz. *that you give a definite statement of your views upon the subject.* As you believe that all men will be happy immediately at death, I wish to be informed on what ground you rest your belief;—whether the *immaculate nature of the soul* exempts it from suffering, or whether it is saved by being divinely instructed instantly after death. Or if you rest your system on the resurrection, I hope you will state definitely your views upon that subject, and inform us whether you believe that the resurrection takes place at the moment of death, or whether you believe in a future general resurrection. This request is made that we may see wherein we differ, and wherein we are agreed, so that we may not dispute about words only. I request this the more earnestly, because I am at a loss to know your precise views upon this subject. Though I have read your works with a view to learn your opinions, I am still in the dark relative to the ground on which you base your scheme. As I have stated my views in a clear and definite manner, I flatter myself that you will not hesitate to state yours in a manner equally clear. I cannot believe that you will refuse to comply with this request, for this would be confessing that you are ashamed of your system. Yes;—should you come forward to confute what is advanced in these Letters, without stating your own opinion with precision, the public would conclude of course, either that you have no settled views on the subject, or that you are sensible of the deformity of



your system, and therefore wish to conceal it. In either case it would operate to your disadvantage.

I cannot conclude these Letters without expressing the satisfaction I feel in the reflection, that we can entertain different views, and even discuss them before the public, and still regard each other with Christian fellowship. Hoping that what has been offered may promote the truth as it is in Jesus, and that the pure gospel may flourish amongst us; that friendship between us may long exist, and that Christian fellowship may not be interrupted,

I subscribe myself,

Yours in the faith of the Gospel,

CHARLES HUDSON.

*Westminster, Mass. March 4, 1827.*

## ERRATA.

Page 60, line 10 from the bottom, for *thus* read *this*.  
Page 65, line 10 from the bottom, for *adults* read *adepts*.  
Page 137, line 2 from the top, for *immortality* read *mortality*.  
Page 148, line 11 from the bottom, for *kings* read *beings*.  
Page 163, bottom line, for *at judgment*, read *at the judgment*.  
Page 170, line 14 from the bottom, for *figure* read *figures*.  
Page 229, line 8 from the top, for *will pretend* read *will not  
pretend*.

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NOTE. *The author's residence being at a great distance from this office, the labor of correcting proofs has devolved entirely upon the printer. This will serve as an apology for any errors which the intelligent reader may discover.*







